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SYR GAWAYN AND THE GRENE KNYȜT¹

I. THE BEHEADING GAME

Most readers of the Middle English poem *Syr Gawayn and the Grene Knyȝt* have probably felt that its action consists of two plots—the beheading game and the loyalty test. Though at the end it seems clear that the story has but one aim, to test Gawain's bravery and his loyalty, the entire difference in the form of the tests and the curious way in which the second is placed inside the first would probably lead any casual reader to assume that originally the plots were separate, and that the Gawain poet arbitrarily united them for his own purposes. In fact, scholars have analyzed the action in this way. Sir Frederick Madden in his *Sir Gawayne* remarked: "It is highly probable that the author may have mingled together several narratives for the purpose of rendering his own more attractive" (p. 305). Later Miss Thomas in her dissertation attempted to show that *GGK* was built by its author from two entirely separate stories—the Carados story (with influence of the *Perlesvaus*) for the first plot, and the Gawain-Guigambresil story for the second. Gaston Paris, though he rejects these sources, seems to analyze the story into the same two distinct parts. He says, for example: "*Le GK mêle à*

¹ In the preparation of this article I have been greatly helped by several of my friends at the University of Chicago. Professor Nitze called my attention to Professor Brown's discussion of the *Fled Bricend*, and suggested the idea which I have tried to develop in the first section. Professor Pietsch gave me references on the pentangle. Professor Cross read the article, and offered some corrections and references. My debt to Professor Manly is more extensive and more difficult to state, because before the writing of the article we had discussed in many conversations the bulk of the matters considered in it.

l'histoire du coup donné et reçu une autre aventure";¹ and he discusses separately "l'épisode principal"² and "l'épisode de la dame."³ Finally he writes: "Il est difficile de dire si cet épisode des trois journées d'épreuve a été ajouté au premier récit, avec lequel il est ici habilement entrelacé, par le poète anglais ou par le poète français qu'il suivait." So also Professor Schofield states: "This romance is made up of two distinct parts nowhere else so connected—the beheading incident and the chastity test."⁴

Is this analysis correct? An analogous case may perhaps suggest that logical independence of the plots does not necessarily imply independence in history. Earlier critics supposed that in the *Beowulf* the fight with Grendel and that with Grendel's mother were originally independent, because logically they are independent. But scholars familiar with folk-tales have come to realize that the two actions are one plot and that they are regularly joined together in stories of a certain type; and recently Professor Panzer, by the study of some two hundred analogues of the story, has proved this to be so. Now, as in the *Beowulf*, so in *GGK*, perhaps appearances are deceptive; at any rate the evidence should be studied. If the two parts of *GGK* were originally distinct, we should expect to find the beheading story in its other occurrences connected with plots and used for purposes different from those of *GGK*. On the other hand, if we find in several cases that the beheading story is connected with an action similar to the latter part of *GGK*, we must suppose that the two parts are not separable. Further, if a study of these cases shows that they can be referred to a definite, established type of story, we may be able to understand more clearly the exact nature of *GGK* and get some idea of how it reached its present form. Thus, by making a study of all stories in which the beheading game appears, we may be able to determine two important points: the original connection or lack of connection between the two parts of *GGK*, and the original nature of the story.

Now there are six or seven stories containing a beheading game similar to that of *GGK*. Some had been pointed out by Sir Frederick

¹ *Romania*, XII, 378.

² *Histoire littéraire*, XXX, 75.

³ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁴ *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*, p. 217. As to the pertinence of "chastity" here, see section II of this article.

Madden, but the entire number was first given by Gaston Paris in the thirtieth volume of the *Histoire littéraire*. The list comprises: the *Fled Bricrend*, the Carados story (in the first continuation of Chrétien's *Perceval*), *Perlesvaus*, *la Mule sanz Frain*, *Diu Krône*, *Gawain and Humbaut*,¹ and the ballads *The Green Knight*, and *The Turke and Gowin*. The oldest of these is doubtless the *Fled Bricrend*, which is preserved in a manuscript dated about 1100 and shows evidences of much earlier origin—perhaps as early as the ninth century.² The story is as follows:³

Brieriu of the Evil Tongue invites Conchobar and the Ultonians to a feast in a great house which he has built. Before the guests reach his house, Brieriu confers separately with the three heroes, Loigaire, Conall, and Cuchulainn, inciting them to contend for the champion's portion⁴ of his house—a great cauldron full of wine, and a seven-year-old boar. As soon as the feast is started, a fight over the champion's portion arises. Conchobar intervenes and brings about a truce, but some days later the trouble breaks out again. Then Conchobar interposes and advises them to seek Curoi mac Dairi as arbiter. First Loigaire goes until he is enveloped in a heavy mist which confuses him and compels him to stop. While he and his servant are waiting for the mist to clear away, they are attacked by a giant. Loigaire is defeated and compelled to flee, leaving his horses, his arms, and his servant. Conall then passes through the same experiences. Finally Cuchulainn sets forth, encounters the magical mist, and is attacked by the giant. He defeats the giant, however, and brings back his comrades' horses, charioteers, and armor to Brieriu's house. Brieriu tries to award the champion's portion to Cuchulainn, but the others object. Then they are sent to another arbiter, but when his decision is rendered they refuse to abide by it. They are then sent to the ford of Yellow, son of Fair, for judgment. Yellow knows that the judgment rendered by the preceding umpire has not been accepted, and he does not wish to involve himself by giving a decision. So he sends them to Terror, son of Great Fear, who, the author states, "used to shift his form into what shape he pleased," and was "called wizard from the extent to which he changed his divers shapes." When they arrive at Terror's loch, he proposes the head-cutting game as a test. "I have an axe, and the man into

¹ Ed. J. Stürzinger and H. Breuer, Halle, 1914. As the book has not yet arrived in Chicago I am unable to consider this poem at present.

² Ed. George Henderson, Irish Texts Society, II. See Henderson's Introduction, p. xlv. See Zimmer, *Zs. f. d. Alt.*, XXXII, 197 and n. 2; and Nutt, *Pop. Studies in Myth.*, VIII, 30.

³ In the early part of the story I omit many details which deal with the stirring up of the strife and have no relevance here.

⁴ On the significance of the champion's portion, see Henderson's Introduction, pp. xlii-iv.

whose hands it shall be put is to cut off my head today, I to cut off his tomorrow." There are two versions as to the actions of Loigaire and Conall: according to one they refuse to submit to the test; according to the other they cut off the giant's head but will not submit themselves to the beheading. Cuchulainn, however, agrees to accept the test. He cuts off the giant's head, and next day lays his head upon a stone. Terror "draws down thrice on Cuchulainn's neck," and then awards him the sovereignty of the heroes of Erin without harming him. But Loigaire and Conall dispute the verdict, and again the Ultonians advise the three to seek Curoi. At Fort Curoi, Bláthnat, Mind's daughter and Curoi's wife, welcomes them. Curoi is not at home, but knowing that they will come, he has instructed his wife regarding their entertainment. "When bedtime was come, she told them that each was to take his night watching the fort until Curoi should return. . . . In what airt soever of the globe Curoi should happen to be, every night o'er the fort he chanted a spell, till the fort revolved as swiftly as a mill-stone." The first night Loigaire watches. A giant comes, hurls tree trunks at Loigaire, and finally seizes him in his hands and throws him out over the fort into the *fosse*. On the second night Conall fares in the same way. On the third night Cuchulainn is attacked by three groups of nine; he kills them all and piles them in a heap. Then the monster of the loch rises up and springs into the fort. Cuchulainn kills it. Finally the giant comes. Cuchulainn overcomes him and makes him promise to grant three wishes—the sovereignty over the heroes, the champion's portion, and precedence for his wife over the other ladies. Upon his re-entering the house he meets Bláthnat, and almost at once Curoi appears. Curoi adjudges the championship to Cuchulainn. Upon the return of the three warriors to Bricriu's house, however, the championship is not definitely awarded.

One day while the three heroes are absent from the court, a great giant enters Conchobar's palace. He carries a huge stock in his left hand and an axe in his right. He proposes the beheading game: "that I may cut off his head tonight, he mine tomorrow night."¹ Fat-neck accepts the challenge, but on the following day refuses to let his head be cut off. On succeeding days Loigaire and Conall fail in the same way. Finally on a night when Cuchulainn is present, the giant appears and accuses the warriors of cowardice. Cuchulainn cuts off his head, and submits to beheading on the next day. He stretches out his neck and blames the giant for not beheading him quickly. The giant lifts the axe and lets it fall on Cuchulainn's neck with the blunt side below. He awards Cuchulainn the champion's portion, and vanishes. "It was Curoi mac Dairi who in that guise had come to fulfil the promise he had given to Cuchulainn."

There the story ends.²

¹ Here the twelfth-century MS ends.

² It is obvious that in this work we have a compilation made from different versions of the story, and at times containing two versions of the same episode. So, for example, the

Professor A. C. L. Brown in his *Iwain* considers this story at considerable length. In addition to printing a summary of the *Fled Bricrend* he gives the following account from the *Dinnshenchas*:¹

Curoi mac Dairi's wife Bláthnat, daughter of Menn, king of Falga, loved Cuchulinn and urged him to come to take her from Curoi. Cuchulinn did so. At an appointed signal, he stormed the fort, slew its owner, and married Bláthnat. Together with her he secured the famous cows and cauldron belonging to Curoi.

Several more detailed versions of this story occur in early sources. One of these, which Professor Kuno Meyer dates in the tenth century, gives the story in the form of a vision seen by Curoi's poet. Another, called "The Tragic Death of Curoi Mac Dari," gives a still more detailed account.² Reference to Curoi and his strife with Cuchulainn occurs also in Welsh.³ The best version for our purposes is that given by Keating. It is as follows:

The heroes of the Red Branch are going to ravage Mana, a sea-girt isle not far from Scotland, where there is a great store of riches and a beautiful damsel, Bláthnat, daughter of the lord of that island. Curoi, hearing of the adventure, transforms himself into a false shape and joins the company. Curoi offers to take the fortress in which the maiden is, provided he is given his choice of the jewels in it. He stops the motion of an enchanted wheel that is placed in the gate of the rath, and thus lets the others in. After the winning of the castle, he claims Bláthnat as his reward, and carries her away. Later Cuchulainn meets Bláthnat, learns that she loves him, and they plan to overcome Curoi. As a signal Bláthnat pours milk into the stream which flows from the castle down to Cuchulainn's ambush. Cuchulainn storms the castle and kills Curoi. After the death of Curoi, the latter's poet, Ferchertne, goes to find Bláthnat. He comes upon her standing on the edge of a cliff. Claspings his arms about her, he plunges with her down the precipice.⁴

Professor Brown shows that Falga is a synonym for the Other World—a fact also pointed out by Henderson (p. 142). Menn is king of the Isle of Man (or Fairyland), and hence his daughter

two beheading incidents are clearly variants of the same incident. See Henderson's Introduction; Thurneysen, *Sagen aus dem alten Irland*; and Brown, *Iwain*, pp. 53, 55. Brown argues that the giant of the mist and Terror are Curoi in disguise.

¹ *Iwain*, p. 51. Also printed by O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, I, 630 and II, 482.

² Ed. K. Meyer, *Zs. f. cell. Phil.*, II, 40.

³ Skene, *The Four Ancient Books of Wales*, I, 254-55.

⁴ *History of Ireland*, trans. O'Mahoney, pp. 282-84.

Bláthnat is a *fée*. "Curoi, her husband, is an exactly parallel figure to Manannán mac Lir. He is a magician and a shape-shifter. . . . He knew beforehand of their coming (as is always the case in the Other World journey) and arranged for them a warm reception." The giant whom Cuchulainn overcomes at Curoi's fort is undoubtedly Curoi. The kind words bestowed by Bláthnat when he conquers her husband are significant. Finally Brown says: "Keeping clear of theory it is plain . . . that Cuchulinn was credited with an Other World Journey, in which he slew a giant who dwelt in a revolving castle, and married the giant's fairy wife."¹

In a later part of his work Professor Brown argues that the form in which fairy-mistress stories are preserved to us has been much changed by rationalizers

"who have modified the original relations of the supernatural actors to make them conform to ordinary human relations. All the Celtic fairy stories, with the exception of the *Echtra Condla*, show traces of having been influenced by a general tendency to represent the fairy folk as merely human beings living in a marvellous or distant land. Fairy relationships are interpreted after a strictly human pattern."²

He then outlines the primitive form of such a tale:

"The *fée* was probably always represented as supreme. She falls in love with a mortal and sends one of her maidens to invite him to her land. Several adventurers thereupon set out, but the *fée* appoints one of her creatures to guard the passage. Naturally, no one overcomes this opposing warrior but the destined hero, who is rewarded by the possession of the *fée*."

The action of Pwyll in offering his wife to Arawn, and the "ruthless way . . . in which Bláthnat marries Cuchulinn after the death of her husband" are most naturally explained on the hypothesis that "the giant was originally only a creature of the *fée*." Further, the opposing warrior originally could not be slain because, like the *fée*, he was an Other-World being. And all of them—Manannán, Arawn, Curoi—are shape-shifters. "The combat was in origin only a test

¹ It is curious to notice that, from an entirely different point of view, Professor Zimmer arrives at the conclusion that the author of the *Fled Bricrend* suppressed the account of Bláthnat and Cuchulainn's love. After outlining the story as told by Keating, he says: "Es liegt daher nahe, dass der Erzähler der Episode von dem Abenteuer der Helden bei Curois Stadt im 9. Jahrhundert [i.e., the narrator of the *Fled Bricrend*] einige kurze Sätzchen dezent unterdrückt hat" (*Sitzungsberichte der königl. preuss. Akad. der Wissensch.*, 1911, p. 205).

² *Iwain*, p. 97.

of valor. Its object was to give the hero a chance to prove that he was worthy of the love of a *fée*."

Of course it is impossible for me to do justice to the force of Professor Brown's presentation, since he arrives at these results through the analysis of many stories and an extensive discussion. If his reasoning is correct (and it seems to me unquestionable), we have in the tale of Curoi the beheading game in connection with a fairy-mistress story as a test which the hero must meet in order to win the fairy, and we also have the proposer of the test (Curoi) established as a shape-shifter.

Though the next three analogues cannot be dated with exactness, I shall discuss them in what is probably the chronological order: the continuation of Chrétien's *Perceval*, the *Perlesvaus*, and the *Mule sanz Frain*. The Carados episode in the *Perceval*¹ runs as follows:

On the day after Pentecost Kay announces to King Arthur that dinner is ready. The king refuses to eat until some strange novelty or other adventure has happened, for he has observed that custom all his life. Just then a tall knight, carrying a long sword, enters the hall. He rides on his horse up to the dais and greets the king. He demands a gift from the king, and when the latter has promised it in advance, he asks one stroke on the neck for another:

Le don est colée recevoir
Por un autre colée prendre (Mpl. MS).

The king asks him what he means, and he answers that if any knight will cut off his head at one stroke of his sword, he will return a year later and give to that knight a stroke in return. The knights are afraid to attempt the adventure, and the stranger taunts them with their cowardice:

Or puet véoir li rois Artus
Que sa cours n'est mie si rice
Comme cascuns dist et afice.

Carados then volunteers. (In the Mpl. MS the knight asks him whether he is one of the most eminent of Arthur's court. He answers, "No, but one of the most worthless.") Arthur tries to dissuade Carados from the task. But Carados pays no attention, and cuts off the stranger's head. The knight picks up his head, puts it in its place, reminds Carados of the agreement to be there a year from that day, and departs. The court is very much oppressed at the thought of Carados' danger.

A year from that day, Carados leaves his father's palace and goes joyously to Arthur's court. When all the members of the court are assembled, the strange knight enters as before and calls for Carados. Arthur asks the

¹ *Perceval le Gallois*, ed. Ch. Potvin, Vol. III, ll. 12625 ff.

stranger for mercy and offers treasure. But the knight refuses. (According to the Mpl. MS, Carados reproaches the knight for his slowness:

De .II. maux me ferez morir
Qui tant aësmés sans férir.)

The chevalier raises the sword, and prepares to strike the blow. But he strikes Carados only with the flat of the sword. He tells Carados to arise, draws him aside, and explains that he is the real father of Carados.

Sir Frederick Madden first called attention to this analogue, suggesting that it was the source of *GGK*. Miss Thomas carried out his suggestion in detail, trying to prove that this version, with some influence from the *Perlesvaus*, was the source of the first episode of *GGK*. This view was sufficiently refuted by Gaston Paris, who pointed out that the axe of *GGK* was much more probably original than the sword of *Perceval*, and that the form of the challenge—you cut off my head and I'll cut off yours—was certainly not so nearly original as in *GGK*, "a strok for an oþer" (l. 287). As the view that the Carados story is a source for *GGK* is not now held, so far as I know, by anyone, I shall not discuss it further.¹ It is to be noted, however, that in the story as we have it here, there are no clearly primitive features except the beheading game itself. There is no fairy talisman, as in *GGK* and *Mule sanz Frain*; no turning castle, as in *Fled Bricrend* and *MSF*; no emphasis upon a fairy color, as in *GGK*. In this story the beheading game is used by a father as a test of the valor of his son. This purpose is unlike the purpose of the test in any other version. Consequently we have three possibilities: the beheading game was originally used as a father's test of his son's courage and has been altered in all other stories; or it was not originally connected with any one story and could be used freely; or it was isolated from its connection in some other kind of story and transferred to this magician-father story.

In the *Perlesvaus*,² the beheading story is involved with a mass of other adventures. After Gawain's sight of the Grail and failure to ask the question in the castle of King Fisherman, he rides until he comes to a castle full of people making merry. As no one offers to entertain him there, he departs,

¹ See Miss Weston's *The Legend of Sir Gawain*, p. 87; and *Cambridge History*, I, 366. Miss Weston's summary of the Perceval episode is not entirely correct. The statement "at the prayer of the queen and her ladies he forbears the blow" cannot be derived from the text given by Potvin.

² *Perceval le Gallois*, ed. Ch. Potvin, Vol. I.

riding until he comes to a poor castle. An ill-dressed knight meets him at the entrance and bids him welcome. In the hall he sees two maidens clad in mean garments. A wounded knight then enters and tells him that Lancelot is fighting a short distance away against four knights. Gawain rides forth, finds Lancelot, and, after the defeat of the assailants, returns to the castle. Gawain and Lancelot bring the three horses of their enemies and give them to the indigent lord of the castle. The knight says that these make him a rich man. Gawain and Lancelot spend the night in the castle, and depart on the morrow. The story follows Lancelot, who passes through an adventure of a perilous passage and a lady in a castle, which seems to be an adaptation of a fairy-mistress story. Then he comes to a waste city in which he finds a palace that seems inhabited. He hears knights and ladies lamenting because a certain knight has been condemned to death. Then a knight approaches him and offers the beheading game. Lancelot must cut off his head or have his own cut off. Under protest Lancelot accepts, promising to return a year from that day and put his head in the same jeopardy. He cuts off the knight's head, and departs amid the lamentation of the people (pp. 103 ff.). At the appointed time Lancelot goes toward the waste city, but on his way he meets the poor knight of the waste castle. The knight tells him that he is given respite until forty days after the achievement of the Grail. He says that he must remain poor until Lancelot returns. Finally on the proper day Lancelot goes to the waste city. He finds the ladies there lamenting that the knight who slew their knight has betrayed them, by failing to keep his promise. As soon as Lancelot appears, a knight comes bearing the axe. This knight is the brother of the one whom Lancelot slew. Lancelot prepares to die. When he hears the blow coming he bends his head and the axe misses. The knight reproves him for having moved. As the knight is aiming a second blow, two ladies appear at the palace windows, and one of them cries out to him that if he is to have her love, he must not harm Lancelot. The knight throws down his axe and asks Lancelot's forgiveness. Then the two maidens explain that they are the two whom he saw at the waste castle, and that the waste city would never have been repeopled, nor should they have regained their estates, unless a knight as loyal as he had come. Other knights have cut off the heads of brothers and relatives, but they have failed to return. Lancelot sees and hears the joy of the people who are now able to come back to the city (pp. 230 ff.).

This story is certainly very far from clear or intelligible. As M. Orlowski remarks: "On s'efforce en vain de trouver un sens à ce conte."¹ Who put the enchantment upon the poor knight and the two ladies, and why it was done, are never suggested. The ending is also inconsistent: if this is a test to release somebody from

¹ In his edition of *la Damoisele à la Mule*, p. 103.

enchantment, the knight never meant to cut off Lancelot's head. Yet here he seems to mean it seriously (Lancelot is apparently saved from the first blow only by the movement of his head), and desists only at the entreaty of the damsel. In one respect this story is certainly less primitive than most other instances of the beheading game—its entire rationalization of that incident. In nearly all other cases we are dealing with a supernatural creature whose head can be cut off and put on again without harm to him. Here we have a human being who dies when his head is cut off, and the second part of the "game" is carried out by a brother.

A great deal has been made of the fact that in this version Lancelot recoils slightly at the first blow, much as Gawain does in *GGK*. Such a similarity does not seem to me evidence of close connection between the versions. A certain amount of development at the point where the stranger returns the blow to the hero is inevitable for purposes of suspense. Most of the versions have details to prolong the reader's anxiety at this point, e.g., the hero's complaint, in *Carados* and *GGK*, that the stranger is too slow ("Wy presch on, pou pro man, pou pretez to longe"), and the three blows in *Fled Bricrend* and *GGK*. Such a resemblance, like the remark in both *MSF* and *Fled Bricrend* that the castle turned like a mill-stone, is merely a natural development of a circumstance common to two stories. The dissimilarities between this version and all others are: that the beheading incident is here connected with a story unlike any that occurs elsewhere, and that the incident has been completely rationalized. This story may, however, be merely a bungling attempt to make something new out of a fairy-mistress story. At the end the poor knight who figures elsewhere does not appear. Instead the two beautiful damsels apparently rule the palace, and one of them commands the beheader to release Gawain. The deserted city is much like the deserted castle which we shall find later in *MSF*, and in this latter case the deserted castle may be explained as an outgrowth from a fairy-mistress story. Upon the success of the hero both become repopulated (for a definite reason in the latter case) by a throng of people who are happy over their release. It is conceivable then that the beheading game in the *Perlesvaus* was a test for the winning of a fairy mistress as it certainly is in *MSF*.

There are several respects in which the stories in *Perceval* and *Perlesvaus* join in being unlike the other analogues: both give the adventure to a hero not elsewhere connected with a beheading story; both connect the beheading game with a plot not elsewhere found in this connection;¹ and both show especially modern features—the sword instead of the axe in *Perceval*, and the complete rationalization of the beheading game in *Perlesvaus*. These facts are evidence that these two sources contain more modern and more altered versions than the other documents, and they tend to discredit the testimony of these versions when in conflict with the others.

The next version, that of the *MSF*,² may be summarized as follows:

King Arthur is holding court at Cardoil at Pentecost. As the lords and ladies are amusing themselves after dinner, they chance to look out of a window and see a maiden approaching on a mule without a bridle. The lady is brought courteously to the king. She tells him that she is sad and will never be happy until her bridle is returned to her,

Qui mauvaisement m'est toluz,
Don perdu ai tote ma joie.

If some knight will go to a certain place and get it for her, she will become his. She offers to lend such an adventurer her mule, which will lead him to a certain castle. Kex undertakes the adventure. He seeks to kiss the lady before departing, but is denied by her until he shall have brought the bridle. She seems also to promise him the castle:

Mès quant li frains sera renduz,
Lors vos iert li chastiax renduz,
Et li baisiers et l'autre chose.

Kex departs riding the mule. The maiden knows that he will not succeed. Kex enters into a great forest infested with wild animals—lions, tigers, and leopards. Kex is greatly frightened, but the animals, running up, recognize the mule and kneel before it on the ground. Passing through the forest the mule enters upon a small path and finally comes to a valley—a frightful place containing serpents, adders, and beasts which send out fire from their heads. Kex is nearly frightened out of his wits. Finally he comes out upon a plain with a fountain and a river in it. He goes on until he comes to

¹ Unless *Perlesvaus* be regarded as at bottom a fairy-mistress story.

² Editions: M. Méon, *Nouveau Recueil de Fables*, 1823, I, 1; *la Mule sans Frain*, ed. R. T. Hill, 1911; *la Damoisele à la Mule*, ed. B. Orlowski, 1911. I use the old title despite Orlowski's comment, because it is the one used in other discussions of *GGK*. Aside from the discussion of it in the *Histoire littéraire*, the poem has been summarized by Professor W. P. Ker, *Folk Lore*, 1898, p. 268 (reprinted by Henderson, *Fled Bricrend*, p. 205), and by Professor Brown, *Iwain*, p. 80.

a great river. He finds no way of crossing it except a narrow plank of iron. He is afraid to attempt the passage, and determines to return. He goes back as he had come, through the valley and the forest.

When the courtiers see Kex returning, they inform the maiden, saying that Kex is certainly bringing the bridle. She knows that he could not have got it so soon, and becomes despondent. Gauvain, smiling, asks her to cease weeping, and promises to bring her the bridle himself. Kex's failure becomes known, and the damsel, going to the king, tells him that Gauvain has promised to go. Gauvain desires to kiss her, and she permits him to do so. Gauvain mounts the mule, goes through the forest and valley, and comes to the river and the narrow iron plank. He rides the mule over this bridge, but it is certain that if the mule had not known the way it would have fallen. It goes then along a little path to a castle. The castle is strongly fortified, surrounded by a wide river, and entirely inclosed with great sharp pikes, on each of which, except one, is placed a knight's head. The castle is turning like a millstone or a whipped top. Gauvain is at a loss as to how to get in, but finally, when a door comes opposite him, jumps through it. The mule takes him through the streets of the castle, which are entirely empty of people. Finally he comes to a house, and is on the point of dismounting, when a dwarf comes along the street and greets him. "*Gauvain bien veillant*," he says. Gauvain asks him who he is and who his lord and lady are, but the dwarf departs without answering. After dismounting, Gauvain sees under an arch a great cave which goes deep into the earth. Up from this cave comes a shaggy *vilain*. He is taller than St. Marcel, and carries over his shoulder a great axe. The *vilain* warns Gauvain that the bridle which he seeks is well guarded, and that he will have to fight many combats for it. The *vilain* has the mule cared for, gives Gauvain a meal, and prepares a large bed for him.

Then the *vilain* proposes the head-cutting game: Gauvain to cut off the *vilain's* head that evening, and the latter to cut off Gauvain's the next morning. Gauvain agrees. The giant puts his neck upon a block, and Gauvain cuts it off at one stroke. The *vilain* then jumps up, takes his head and goes into the cave. Gauvain goes to bed. Next morning after Gauvain has arisen, the *vilain* appears whole and sound, bearing the axe. He reminds Gauvain of his agreement, and the latter replies that he has no intention of avoiding it. The *vilain* raises the axe, but he has no real desire to harm the hero, because he has been loyal and has held to his promise. Gauvain asks him how he can gain the bridle. The *vilain* answers that before midday Gauvain must fight two chained lions who could defeat ten knights. Gauvain meets the lions separately and kills them. The *vilain* then leads him to a chamber where lies a wounded knight. The latter says that Gauvain must fight him. It is a custom there that when a knight "*d'autre terre*" comes to seek the bridle for the damsel he has to fight this champion, and if he is killed, his head is placed on one of the pikes. The *vilain* arms them;

they mount and fight. Gauvain conquers the other knight, but in response to the latter's pleading does not kill him.

Gauvain again asks the *vilain* how he is to get the bridle. The latter says he must fight two serpents. Gauvain fights and kills them. Before he is disarmed from this fight, the dwarf, on the part of his lady, invites Gauvain to dine with his mistress and to receive the bridle. The *vilain* conducts Gauvain to the lady. She greets him courteously. She says that great harm and loss have come to her through him because he has killed her savage beasts. The lady and Gauvain sit down; the *vilain* gives them basins of gold in which they wash their hands, and then they dine. After eating, Gauvain is eager to depart. Then the lady says that the maiden who desires the bridle is her sister, and offers to Gauvain, if he will stay there, herself and her possessions. Gauvain answers that he must return to Arthur's court, and asks for the bridle. He thanks her for her offer. The lady indicates the bridle hanging on a silver nail. Having at last obtained it, he takes his leave of the lady. The castle stops turning until Gauvain has left it. After he has departed he sees the streets crowded with people who are extremely joyous. He asks the *vilain* how the streets have become thus suddenly filled. The latter explains that the people have been concealed in caves because of the ravages of the beasts which Gauvain has killed. Gauvain returns as he had come. When he arrives at the castle the damsel kisses him more than a hundred times. She offers herself to him. Gauvain tells his adventure. When Gauvain has finished his story, the girl asks leave to depart. The king, Queen Genievre, and the knights try to persuade her to remain, but she says she cannot. She rides away on her mule.

There are certainly inconsistencies in this story. Why does the maiden appeal to Arthur's court for her bridle when her sister has it? Why does the lady of the castle keep the lions and dragons to the harm of her people? Why, if the bridle is so important as the difficulties of attaining it suggest, does she give it up so readily? Perhaps these points can be explained by a little analysis. In the first place, in the various difficulties set up for the seeker of the bridle there is no effort to prevent *every* adventurer from getting it. The difficulties are so arranged that they will eliminate most seekers, but still be surmountable by *one*. The iron plank is there as a means of deterring the faint-hearted (like Kay) but of assisting the courageous. The *vilain* proposes the beheading game only as a test; he does not desire to carry out the second part, though by doing so he could prevent every seeker from attaining the bridle. He helps the knight through all the later tests, and presents them one

by one so that the knight can succeed in them. When the hero has accomplished the last feat, he is entertained by the lady and given the bridle without protest. It is clear that the lady has not arranged these tests in order to keep the bridle. It is meant that someone shall win that object. Therefore the bridle is only a pretext, not the real point of the story. Though entirely unemphasized in the poem, the lady's offer of her love to the hero who overcomes all difficulties is obviously the real purpose of the story. There are, moreover, certain details in this poem which are definitely connected with the Other-World journey plus the fairy-mistress type of story. The forest, filled with animals who recognize the mule and bow to it, is much like the forest guarded by the giant herdsman in *Iwain* and *The Lady of the Fountain*;¹ the "perilous passage,"² various feats performed by the knight at the instance of a servitor of the lady of the castle, and finally, when the knight has accomplished every requirement, the offer of the lady that he become her husband—all these are regular elements in fairy-mistress stories. It is notable also that they are preserved in a primitive form: neither the *villain* nor the wounded knight is represented as related in any way to the lady; she is absolute mistress. There are furthermore many other primitive features in the story; the fountain before the castle, the turning castle, the heads on pikes,³ are commonplaces in old Celtic and modern folklore. If most of the story is definitely of the fairy-mistress type, is it not probable that the rest has been altered slightly? If we assume, as Professor Brown would probably do, that the maiden who comes to Arthur's court is not a sister but a servant of the lady of the castle, we do away at once with one of the chief inconsistencies of the story. Then the request of the damsel for assistance in getting her bridle is merely a device for luring the mortal hero to the fairy who loves him. The difficulties put in the way are intended to prevent any but the destined knight from reaching the fairy mistress.⁴ They do prevent Kay, but do not hinder Gawain. The

¹ Pointed out by Orlowski, p. 113.

² See Nitze, *PMLA*, XXIV, 375 and n. 5.

³ See Professor Schofield's *Studies on the Libeaus Desconus*, pp. 175 ff. The turning castle has been so definitely established as a feature of Other-World stories that I do not need to discuss it here. See Sypherd, *Studies in Chaucer's House of Fame*, pp. 138 ff.; Nitze, *Elliott Studies*, I, 26, note.

⁴ See Brown's summary of the primitive form of the fairy-mistress story, above, p. 54.

friendliness of the *vilain* is then understandable because he knows that Gawain is the right knight, and wishes to see him win the lady. The idea that the animals harmed the people would be a natural development by a late story-teller who did not understand the purpose of their presence in the story—as a test of the valor of the knight. In fact, we have in *MSF* a fairy-mistress story with very slight alterations and decidedly primitive characteristics. Hence here again, as in the *Fled Bricrend*, we have the head-cutting episode used as a test for the achievement of a fairy mistress. Furthermore, the notably primitive elements in the story give it much greater weight as evidence than the *Perceval* and *Perlesvaus* versions.

The next analogue, *Diu Krône*,¹ brings with it a rather complex problem of relationship to the poem just considered. In part it is almost identical with *MSF*: that part I pass over very briefly in the following summary.

A maiden comes riding to Arthur's court. She says she has been sent by her lady Amurfina to bring Gawein. The knight says he will go, and he rides away with the maiden. The writer explains what the adventure was. A king, dying, had left two daughters. To them he gave a bride, saying that while they had it they should retain their possessions. The elder of the sisters, Amurfina, seized the bride, and exiled the younger, Sgoidamur. The younger started for King Arthur's court to ask for aid. The elder, learning of this, feared the sister might get Gawein's help, and so used this device to prevent her. At length Gawein and the messenger reach the castle; there a dwarf welcomes Sir Gawein. After some time he is introduced into a beautiful room where he finds the lady sitting on a bed. After dining and conversing they go to bed. The bed is protected by a dream sword which coils itself about Gawein as he is about to draw near the lady. He has to swear to be constant to her; then the sword releases him. He drinks a potion which deprives him of knowledge of his identity; he supposes that he has always been in that country and has been married to Amurfina for thirty years. No one calls him Gawein. For fifteen days he remains in this condition. Then he happens to see a picture of himself fighting with another knight (actually the father of Amurfina), remembers his past life, recalls that he must go to free a certain king from a giant, demands his armor, and takes his departure (ll. 7647 ff.).

On the day of Pentecost, Sgoidamur reaches Arthur's court, complains of the injustice of her sister, and offers her love to anyone who will get the bride for her. From this point the story is practically identical with

¹ *Diu Krône*, ed. G. F. H. Scholl, *Bibl. des litt. Vereins*, XXVII (1852).

MSF. When Keii returns without the bridle Launcelot offers to go, but the maid requests that Gawein be sent. Gawein departs, arrives at the enchanted castle, and, after seeing the dwarf, meets the magician Gansguoter, who is the uncle of Amurfina and Sgoidamur.¹ He takes the place of the *vilain* in *MSF*. He proposes that Gawein cut off his head, on condition that on the following day Gawein will permit his own to be struck off. When it comes the magician's turn to cut off Gawein's head, he makes two feints, but does not harm the knight, because he merely desires to test Gawein's courage. After having killed lions, overcome a wounded knight, and slain dragons, Gawein hears a noise of merry-making, and is informed that the maidens of Amurfina are rejoicing at his success: they had been afraid that he would be hurt. The magician explains that Amurfina is sister of Sgoidamur, tells what relation he is to them, and expresses great delight that Gawein has won. The dwarf appears and invites Gawein to meet his lady. When the people of the castle learn that Gawein has freed them from the animals, they come from places under the earth where they had been concealed. Gawein takes Amurfina and the bridle to Arthur's court. He gives Sgoidamur the bridle, and presents her as bride to Gasozein de Dragoz (ll. 12600 ff.).

Because of the very close resemblance of part of the story in *Diu Krône* with *MSF* it has been commonly supposed that the former was derived from the latter. More recently M. Orlowski has contested this view, declaring that there are no verbal resemblances between the two, and, in particular, that *Diu Krône* offers a more logical version of the story. He points out that the idea of a sister deprived of her patrimony explains the action of the damsel in appealing to Arthur's court. He tries to establish a "Disinherited Sister" type of story, by referring to an episode in the *Iwain*,² which is in substance as follows:

On the death of the lord of Noire Espine, the elder of his daughters seizes the estates. The other says she will appeal to Arthur's court. The elder sister reaches Arthur's court first, presents her case to Gawain, and gains his assistance. When the younger arrives she is unable to get Gawain's help. Arthur gives her forty days to secure a champion. She starts out to find Iwain, falls ill, and a friend of hers continues the search. This other maiden at length comes upon Iwain and gains his consent to help the younger sister. Meanwhile Gawain has concealed himself at a short distance from court, and when he returns he is so armed as to be unrecognizable. On the

¹ There is nothing about the cave which Gawain saw in *MSF*.

² Ed. W. Foerster, 1906, ll. 4703-5106 and 5810-6459. See Orlowski's discussion, pp. 39 ff.

last of the forty days Iwain and the younger sister appear. The two champions fight until nearly exhausted; then they learn each other's names. At once they engage in a friendly rivalry, each asserting that he has been defeated. The king forces the elder sister to give the younger her share in the inheritance.

Now obviously the only resemblances here are the situation of one sister deprived of her inheritance by another, and the younger's appeal to Arthur. These resemblances are true only of *Iwain* and *Diu Krône*, for in *MSF* there is no word of unfriendliness between the two sisters, or of any disinheritance.¹ Further, the elements in common between the episode in *Iwain* and that in *Diu Krône* are too slight to establish a "Disinherited Sister" type. They have to do only with the first parts of the stories; the latter parts are totally unlike. Such similarity as there is, is much more likely to be due to borrowing by Heinrich from Chrétien than to a common source for both. Moreover, on the basis of M. Orłowski's supposition, there is no means of explaining the large number of elements in *MSF* which are connected with the fairy-mistress type. In fact, the theory of a "Disinherited Sister" type falls to the ground because of its failure to explain the chief features of this story.

In his attempt to give greater authority to *Diu Krône* than to *MSF*, M. Orłowski argues that Heinrich von dem Türlin was rather a translator than an original *trouveur*, and tries to establish for him a character for conservatism (p. 61). Hence he thinks that there is a common source for *Diu Krône*, *MSF*, and *Iwain*; and the suggestion is that this source would have told the twofold story much as it stands in *Diu Krône* (p. 63). Now such a supposition is by no means the only way of interpreting the facts, nor are the evidences which M. Orłowski gives for it sufficient. As I have shown, the evidences for the derivation of the story from a "Disinherited Sister" theme are extremely slight. As to Heinrich's conservatism, one can grant that, and still suppose that he drew from an immediate source which at this point expanded the story of *MSF* or of its immediate predecessor.

The positive arguments which may be made against the priority of Heinrich's version are as follows. If the story was originally

¹ Orłowski's table on p. 51 is incorrect in suggesting that "la sœur puînée chassée du patrimoine par l'autre" occurs in *MSF*.

like his, Païen (the author of *MSF*) must either have had as source a mutilated copy of the story, or he must have knowingly told an incomplete story, leaving the relation of the sisters obscure and illogical and not explaining the meaning of the bridle. Heinrich's version seems to be much less primitive, particularly in making the man who proposes the head-cutting a magician instead of a mere servant of the lady, and in its elaborate series of relationships—Gansguoter the husband of Arthur's mother and uncle of the two damsels, Gawein the husband of Amurfina, and Gasozein the husband of Sgoidamur. Païen's version, with but slight alteration, can be connected with a primitive type of story; Heinrich's cannot be connected with any, and has in its earlier part incidents from various sources.¹ Finally, in Heinrich's story there is no meaning in the head-cutting incident or the other feats which Gawain must perform, because if the "Disinherited Sister" theme is original, Amurfina was not trying to test knights, but actually to prevent anyone's taking away the bridle.² Other inconsistencies might be pointed out. For example, why does Amurfina give up the bridle so willingly at the end? Why does Gansguoter favor one sister rather than the other? On the other hand, it is quite easy to see how the story as told by Heinrich was developed from *MSF*. Finding in his source the suggestion that the damsel messenger and the lady of the castle were sisters, and seeing that their functions in the story were not clear, Heinrich or his predecessor prefixed the obvious story of disinheritance, perhaps deriving it from M. Orłowski's passage in the *Iwain*, or, as it is a commonplace, from no definite source. In developing it he rationalized the relations of the story and added an explanation of the significance of the bridle. It seems to me that the action of Heinrich or his predecessor is much more natural than either of the assumptions with regard to Païen made above, and the

¹ Professor Armstrong, in his edition of the *Chevalier à l'Épée*, after examining all analogues of the story of the enchanted bed, concludes that Heinrich borrowed his version directly from the *Chevalier*. See pp. 59 and 60.

² Professor Jenkins, in a review of Dr. Hill's edition of *MSF*, in *MLN*, XXVI (1911), 150, has given a bit of evidence which seems to indicate that *Diu Krône* was derived directly from *MSF*. *MSF*, l. 713, tells of a lion that fights with its tail (*coe*) and *Diu Krône* in the corresponding passage (l. 13262) reads *Zagel*. "Did the archetype have *poe* instead of *coe*? The second lion, a few lines below, strikes with his claws as we should expect." Such an error would be unlikely to date very far back: at any rate Heinrich had either *MSF* as his source or some version very close to it.

development of the story is quite a simple matter. In any case, *MSF* certainly is more primitive than *Diu Krône*, and all the evidence seems to lead us back to the standard opinion which M. Orłowski seeks to upset: namely, that in *MSF* and *Diu Krône*, we have, as in the *Fled Bricrend*, the beheading incident used as a test in the winning of a fairy mistress.

We come now to *Syr Gawayn and the Grene Knyȝt*.¹

King Arthur held feast at Camylot during Christmas. On New Year's Day the feast is prepared, but Arthur refuses to eat until some adventure has happened, for such was his custom. Scarcely is the first course served when in at the hall door enters a fearful creature, half a giant and all clad in green. His horse and all its trappings are green. He is unarmed, but carries in one hand a holly branch and in the other a great axe. He asks for the ruler of the company. Meanwhile everyone looks long at the man, eager to know what it might mean

fat a habel & a horse myȝt such a hwe lach,
As growe grene as fe gres & grener hit semed [ll. 234-35].

The folk deem it "phantom and fairy" (l. 240), and are afraid to answer his question. Arthur welcomes the man, saying that he is "head of this hostel." The stranger says he has come because of the great reputation of Arthur's knights for courtesy and deeds of arms. He says that the holly branch may show that he comes in peace, for if he had desired fighting he has plenty of armor at home. He asks a sport (*gomen*): if any is so brave that he "dar stifyl strike a strok for an ofer" (l. 287), he will give him the axe, and bide the first blow. The other shall have respite of a year and a day. No one replies, and the Green Knight taunts Arthur's warriors with cowardice. Ashamed and angry, Arthur accepts the offer. Gawain, however, at once asks that he be allowed to relieve the king of the task. Arthur grants the request. The Green Knight asks Gawain's name, and, when he learns it, says he is glad that Gawain is the one to give the blow. He reminds Gawain that the latter must seek him a year from that day. The Green Knight kneels and uncovers his neck. Seizing the axe, Gawain strikes off his head. The knight starts up, grasps his head, which has rolled along the floor, and lifts it up. Holding his head by the hair, he steps into his stirrups and mounts. The head lifts up its eyelids and speaks, reminding Gawain of his promise, and instructing him to seek out the Green Chapel a year from that time. He then rides out of the hall. King Arthur, troubled though he is, tries to reassure the queen, and the court again sits to the feast.

The morning after All Hallows Gawain prepares to seek the Green Knight. He arms himself properly, takes his shield with the pentangle

¹ Ed. Sir F. Madden in *Syr Gawayne* (Bannatyne Club), 1839; R. Morris, E.E.T.S., IV, 1864.

painted on it, and rides away on his steed Gryngolet. All that see him sigh in their hearts and say it is a shame that he should die at the hands of "an aluisch mon." He rides through England into North Wales and apparently from thence into Wirral. He asks the people that he meets if they can tell him about a Green Knight, but gets no information. At every ford he passes over he finds a foe. He fights with serpents, wolves, wild men, bulls, bears, boars, and giants. The winter and snow, however, are worse than his fighting. Thus he rides until Christmas. He prays to Christ and Mary for some lodging where he may hear mass. Almost immediately he comes upon a castle, "with a pyked palays, pyned full pik" (l. 769).¹ The drawbridge is up, but when he calls a porter answers and bids him welcome. The bridge is let down, the gate is opened, and Gawain is brought courteously into the castle. The lord of the castle welcomes him, leads him to a chamber, and orders a servant to be sent to him. Gawain takes off his armor, and puts on the rich robes which are brought to him. He has dinner in the hall, and while there tells his host who he is. After dinner they go to chapel, and there Gawain meets the lord's wife, who seems to him more beautiful than Guinevere. With her is an old lady. After dinner they have refreshments and enjoy themselves with sports. Next day at the meal Gawain sits with the lady, the lord of the castle sitting with the "auncian wyf."

For three days the company remains together, and then some of the guests depart. Gawain says that he also must go, and when asked by the knight he explains the purpose of his journey. The knight smiles, says that the Green Chapel is not two miles thence, and so induces Gawain to stay with him until the appointed day. Then the lord of the castle proposes that next day Gawain stay in bed until meal time, and meanwhile he himself will go hunting. Further, whatever each wins he shall exchange with the other. Gawain agrees to this arrangement. In the morning the lord arises early and goes off to hunt. While he is thus engaged Gawain sleeps. While Gawain is still in bed, the lady enters his room, comes to the bed, and sits on the bedside. Gawain pretends to be asleep, but as she continues to stay there he decides to speak to her. The lady makes love to Gawain, but he only replies to her in a respectful and courteous fashion. Finally she kisses him and leaves him alone. Meanwhile the knight has killed many deer, which his men "break" and bring back to the castle. When the host has returned he gives the deer to Gawain, and receives from Gawain a kiss. When he asks where his guest won this weal, Gawain refuses to tell because that was not in the agreement. They renew their agreement for the next day. The knight hunts and kills a boar; the lady visits Gawain again and kisses him; Gawain resists her temptations; and in the evening the two men exchange their winnings, renewing their covenant for the following day. On this third morning, the knight kills a fox, and the lady visits Gawain as

¹ Can this line be a reminiscence of the pikes with human heads placed on them? See above, pp. 60 and 62, and Professor Schofield's article.

before. Again Gawain resists her temptation, but finally accepts from her her green girdle, which she says will protect him from being wounded or slain. Thinking of the danger he is soon to be in, Gawain naturally accepts the "lace" and promises to conceal it. When the host returns he gives Gawain the fox skin, and receives from him three kisses. Gawain asks for a man to show him the way to the Green Chapel, and the knight assigns one to him.

On New Year's morning Gawain arms himself, places the "lace" twice about his loins in hope of saving himself, and rides away on Gryngolet under guidance of his man. The servant tries to dissuade Gawain from going to the Green Chapel, because the man who dwells there is the worst upon earth. Gawain insists upon going forward. Then the man tells him to ride down a certain path till he comes to the bottom of a valley; there on his left on a "launde" he will see the chapel. He bids Gawain farewell and leaves him. Gawain pushes his way along the shore of a brook through the woods and comes into a valley. Looking about, he sees a wilderness, no sign of a habitation, but high steep cliffs on both sides, and rough "knokled knarreȝ." He sees no chapel, but soon notices in a clearing a flat-topped (*balȝ*) hill near the ford of the stream. He goes to the hill, fastens his horse to a tree, and walks about the hill. It has a hole in the end and on each side, and is hollow within, "nobot an olde caue." Gawain wonders whether this could be the Green Chapel. Feeling its uncanniness, he says: "He[re] myȝt aboute myd-nyȝt, [þe] dele his matynnes telle," and later "Hit is þe corsedest kyrk, þat euer I com inne." Then he hears a noise beyond the brook as of someone grinding a scythe on a grindstone. He calls out, and the man in green, carrying his axe, comes out of a hole in the cliff beyond the stream, walks to the brook, hops over on his axe, and greets Gawain. The hero bends his neck for the blow. The Green Knight lifts the axe, but as he brings it down, Gawain shrinks aside. The knight reproves him; Gawain tells him to hurry up. The knight aims at him, but withholds his hand. Gawain says he thinks the man is afraid of himself. Then the knight strikes Gawain a blow which wounds him slightly. Gawain refuses to abide another, saying that he has fulfilled his compact. Then the knight reveals himself as the host of the castle, and explains that he menaced Gawain three times in accordance with the three agreements they made. The third time he wounded him slightly because he had concealed the "lace" and was in this respect disloyal. He knew all about the wooing of his wife because he sent her to test Gawain. Angered, Gawain takes off the girdle and returns it to the knight. The latter gives the girdle back to Gawain as a remembrance of his adventure. Gawain says he will wear it in remembrance of his fault. The Green Knight says that his name is Bernlak de Hautdesert. The ancient lady was Morgne la Faye, and she sent him to Arthur's court to test his knights, and cause Guinevere to grieve and die of fright at the sight of the ghostly speaker with his head in his hand. Gawain refuses an invitation to return to the castle, and rides back to Arthur's court wearing the belt as a baldric. He shows

the "lace" to the king, and tells him the story. The lords and ladies of the Round Table agree to wear a baldric of bright green "for sake of fat segge."

Now it is obvious enough that this is a much better constructed tale than *MSF* or the episodes in *Perlesvaus* and *Diu Krône*. Yet even here there is one element of feebleness and inconsistency—the explanation of the test given by the Green Knight at the end. He says that Morgain sent him

For to assay þe surquidre, ȝif hit soth were,
þat rennes of þe grete renoun of þe Rounde Table:
Ho wayued¹ me þis wonder, your wytteȝ to reue,
For to haf greued Gaynour, & gart hir to dyȝe,
With g[il]opnyng of fat ilke gomen, þat gostlych spekere,
With his hede in his honde, bifore þe hyȝe table [ll. 2457 ff.].

The enmity of Morgain to Arthur and his court is well known,² and it seems to have suggested this explanation. By means of the horn and mantle tests she did bring humiliation upon Guinevere and Arthur.³ But this test is quite a different matter; by it Gawain gains only greater glory, and Arthur's court a better reputation. Being an enchantress, she of course knew what would be the outcome of her scheme. Why should she then plan a test which Gawain could meet? Further, if she was inspired by enmity, why was she so just in carrying out the tests? She tests him with perfect justice: had he proved disloyal to the lord of the castle, he would have been killed. What was her motive? What could she gain by this test? The explanation is one that seems to be sensible superficially but is inherently unreasonable. It was almost certainly added by some late redactor familiar with Morgain's horn and mantle tests.⁴

Before attempting to decide what the real purpose of the beheading game in *GGK* was, I wish to point out first two distinctively primitive features of the story. The most striking of these is the

¹ For "wayued," instead of "wayned," see Skeat, *Trans. Phil. Soc.*, 1885-87, pp. 365, 366.

² Cf. Miss Paton, *Fairy Mythology*, particularly chap. II, pp. 13 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, 105 ff. This is not entirely clear, because in most extant stories in which Morgain is mentioned with the horn, the horn was taken to King Mark's court. Miss Paton, however, argues that in an early form in which Arthur tried the horn, Morgain was the sender.

⁴ Note that the poem itself is not consistent on the point. In ll. 2361 ff. the Green Knight states that he caused his wife to test Gawain: "I wroȝt hit myseluen | I sende hir to assay þe."

insistence upon the color green. The author could scarcely have emphasized the color more than he did. In the initial description of the knight as he enters the hall we are told in ll. 150, 151, 157, 161, 167, 170, 172, 175, 179, 189, 192, 216, 220, and 235 that his clothes, his horse, his armor, and his axe were green. It is clear that we are meant to understand that even his complexion was green—cf. ll. 149–50, “He ferde as freke were fade, | & ouer-al enker grene”; l. 151, “Ande al grayped in grene pis gome & his wedes”; l. 305 “[he] Bende his bresed broȝeȝ, blycande grene”; and ll. 234 and 235, quoted above.¹ The only attempt to explain this emphasis upon green has been made by Miss Thomas. She supposes that the poet applied this color to the strange knight by analogy with red knights and various other colored knights (pp. 39 ff.). Yet she knows in a general way that green is a fairy color. “Green is undoubtedly a more unnatural colour even than blood-red; and is moreover extended to the knight’s own person—but it is a fairy colour and apt for wonders—found also as the hue of hair in many kinds of myths and legends and in no wise so amazing as would have been, for instance, blue or purple” (p. 43). Now anyone who has read the poem must realize at once that this explanation is entirely unsatisfactory; there is too much emphasis on the green knight, the green horse, the green chapel, the green “lace.” Of course the green horse is impossible from Miss Thomas’ point of view. The real explanation is that green is a color worn by Other-World beings.² Green and red are the two special colors that distinguish them. In *Cuchulinn’s Sick Bed*, Cuchulinn meets two women—one in green and one in a fivefold crimson cloak. They are Other-World people. Later he sees the one in green again, and is induced by her to visit the Other World.³ In the *Conception of Mongan* an Other-World knight appears in a green cloak.⁴ In the story of Ciaban, voyagers see “a horseman on a dark green steed with a golden bridle, riding over the waves.” It is Manannán, king of the Underworld, whom Rhÿs compares with

¹ Note also ll. 2227–28:

& þe gome in þe grene gered as fyrst
Boþe þe lyre & þe legges, lokkes, & berde.

² See Professor Cross’s note in *Mod. Phil.*, XII, 595, n. 3.

³ *Voyage of Bran*, I, 153.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 72.

Curoi.¹ Green is a fairy color in the ballads; in *Thomas Rhymer*, it is said:

The meist of them [ghosts] was clad in green
To shew that death they had been in.²

Reginald Scot says that fairies were clothed in green; Bourne says that fairies are always clad in green; and in a story told by William of Newburgh we read of the finding of two fairy children in Suffolk—"the whole surface of their skin was tinged of a green color."³ In modern Celtic folklore green is frequently associated with Other-World creatures. In one story, for example, Guinevere (who was originally an Other-World being) rides on a green horse.⁴ Another story, told by the Welsh gypsies, deals with "the Green Man of No Man's Land," who is a sort of magician.⁵ Wentz says that green is worn by nearly all the fairy folk of Britain and Ireland.⁶ Examples are given by Rhÿs and Lady Wilde, and could be multiplied indefinitely.⁷ It seems hardly worth while to give further

¹ O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, II, 198; Brown, *Iwain*, p. 96.

² Cf. Rudiger, *Zaubern u. Aberglauben in eng.-schot. Volksballaden*, p. 42.

³ These references are from Keightley's *Fairy Mythology*, pp. 281, 290, 297.

⁴ W. Y. Evans Wentz, *The Fairy Faith*, p. 314.

⁵ F. H. Groome, *Gypsy Folk Tales*, p. 254. This story is probably a modern descendant of *GGK*. Jack, a young miller, plays with a stranger and loses; the latter tells the youth that his name is the Green Man of No Man's Land, and that Jack must find his castle in a year and a day or be beheaded. When the time to go to the castle draws near, Jack starts out to search for it. He comes upon an old woman who aids him by summoning a quarter of all the men in the world and asking them if they know the Green Man. As they do not know him she summons the birds and asks them. When they are unable to answer, she sends Jack to her elder sister. The latter calls together half the world but cannot learn who the Green Man is. She sends Jack to her eldest sister. The third sister calls all the people in the world, and then all the birds. At last the Eagle says he has just come from the Green Man. Having been instructed specifically, Jack goes to a certain pool and steals the feathers of a white bird. The bird (the Green Man's daughter) cries out, but Jack refuses to give her the feathers until she agrees to carry him to the Green Man's castle. The Green Man sets Jack impossible tasks, which the daughter performs. Finally Jack marries the daughter.

The bare skeleton of this is much like *GGK*: within a year and a day the hero must reach the Green Man's castle; there he undergoes tests and finally wins a bride. Most of the details of the old story have been replaced, however, by more common folklore motifs: e.g., the inquiries of the birds (cf. Dasent's *Three Princesses of Whiteland*), the Swan Maiden, and the helpful maiden (cf. Dasent's *Master Maid*), whose function is much like that of the Turk in *The Turke and Gowin*. The most significant fact about this variant is that it is a Welsh story, and hence probably derived from Celtic sources.

⁶ Wentz, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

⁷ For other examples of green associated with Other-World beings, see *The Courtship of Etain*, in Leahy, *Heroic Romances*, I, 12; *Táin Bó Cúalnge*, Ir. Texte, Extra Band, p. 28; *Aidead Muirchertaig*, Rev. Celt., XXIII, 397; *Echtra mac Echdach Muigmedon*, Eriu, IV, 105; *Agallamh na Senorach*, *Silva Gadelica*, II, 120, 187, 196, 202, 220, etc. I owe these references to Miss Elizabeth Willson of the University of Chicago. On fairies dressed in green, cf. Campbell, *Tales of the West Highlands*, IV, 313.

details: from the examples given above, among which, it will be noticed, are instances of green as color of clothing, complexion, and horses, it is certain that the use of green here indicates that the knight is an Other-World creature. Further it is to be observed that, like Curoi, Manannán, and other guardians of *fées*, he is a shape-shifter, for as lord of the castle he appears in so different a form that Gawain does not recognize him.

Another primitive feature is the description of the Green Chapel.

Sone a lyttel on a launde, a lawe as hit we[re]; (2171)
A balȝ berȝ, bi a bonke, þe brymme by-syde,
bi a forȝ of a flode, þat ferked þare;

Den[n]e he boȝeȝ to þe berȝe, aboute hit he walkeȝ, (2178)
D[e]batande with hym-self, quat hit be myȝt.
Hit hade a hole on þe ende, & on ayȝer syde,
& ouer-grown with gresse in glodes ay where,
& al watȝ holȝ in-with, nobot an olde caue,
Or a creuisse of an olde cragge, he couȝe hit noȝt deme.

This is a surprising place for an appointment, and Gawain does not know what to make of it. It is not a romantic convention; the poet himself seems to be rather surprised by it. But it is found in primitive stories and in modern folk-tales; it is in fact a fairy mound.

"In tales dating from the eighth century at the very latest, tales the incidents, personages, and spirit of which animate Irish legend for the thousand years that follow, and still form one of the staples of Irish peasant belief, we find a tribe of superhuman beings whose abiding dwelling-place is the fairy mound, the hollow hill. . . . They are the Tuatha De Danann of the annals. . . . Manannán and Fann and Lug, the father of Cuchulinn, are of this race. They are the "fairies" of the modern Irish peasant, who calls them by the same name as did the story-teller of Connla a thousand years ago: (*aes*) *side*, the folk of the mound."¹

One of the mounds supposed to have been inhabited by the *side* is described as a hill over three hundred feet in diameter and seventy feet high. Its top is a platform one hundred and twenty feet across. It is entered by a square doorway which leads to a stone passage more

¹ *Voyage of Bran*, I, 174-75. See the references in the index of Wentz's *Fairy Faith*. See also Zimmer, *Zs. f. d. Alt.*, XXXIII, 262; Borlase, *The Dolmens of Ireland*, pp. 853-84; MacCulloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*, pp. 63 ff.; W. Johnson, *Folk Memory*, pp. 150 ff.

than sixty feet long and finally a domed interior twenty feet high.¹ The general character of this is obviously similar to that of the *berȝ* described in *GGK*. The description of the Green Chapel, therefore, is a primitive element, part of the original tale.²

Now both of these features—the emphasis on green, and the description of the Green Chapel—point to a story involving Other-World beings, in the course of which the hero is tested by a shape-shifter. If the purpose of the test is not a desire on the part of Morgain la Faye to humiliate Guinevere, what is it? The fact that in the *Fled Bricrend* and *MSF* the beheading game is used as a test for the winning of a fairy mistress suggests that such may be its purpose here. Let us test the theory. In the first place, an Other-World being lures Gawain from Arthur's court through a long and difficult journey to a strange castle. There a lady offers herself to him and pretends to love him. This is of course the fairy-mistress type. Further, the proposer of the test is a shape-shifter and the husband of the lady—like Curoi and Manannán. These two great resemblances seem to me enough to establish a probability that *GGK* is a fairy-mistress story. But there are two features which are not part of this type: first, the lady acts as she does merely to test Gawain, not

¹ New Grange. See Squire, *Mythology of British Isles*, pp. 135 ff.; Rolleston, *Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race*, p. 69; *Trans. RIA*, XXX, 1-94.

² It is probable that the holly bough which the Green Knight carried was in the original story; cf. ll. 203 ff. (especially 206-7). The Green Knight had no helmet or hauberk,

Bot in his on honde he hade a holyn bobbe
Dat is grattest in grene, when greues ar bare.

He says:

ȝe may be seker bi þis braunch þat I bere here
þat I passe as in pes, & no plyȝt seche (ll. 265-66).

It is clear that the greenness of the branch is supposed to be connected with the color of the knight. Mr. A. B. Cook in his article on "The European Sky-God" (*Folk Lore*, XVII, 338 ff.) argues that the Green Knight was originally a tree-god and his holly branch a sort of emblem. He shows that the mining population of Dean swear by a stick of holly, and discusses examples of heroes who carry boughs (especially from Wolfram's *Parsival*). Whether one accept all his theory or not, one must conclude, I think, that there is some meaning in the holly stick. The holly is said to be dear to the fairies, and a story is told of a man who brought their wrath down upon him because he cleaned a chimney with a branch of holly (*Enc. Brit.*, X, 134). In Campbell's *Tales of the West Highlands*, I, 306, a character who is a sort of magician uses a holly branch to overcome a number of people. (The story is far from clear or coherent.) Dean Stanley is quoted as saying that the heathen hung holly in their houses that the fairies might find shelter under it (*Notes and Queries*, 4th Series, X, 492).

Probably some features of the description of the castle are also original. See above, p. 68, note. The shining white appearance of the castle ("hit schemered & schon," l. 772, and had "chalk whyt chymnees" upon roofs "þat blenked ful quyte," ll. 798-99) is characteristic of Other-World castles. Cf. Brown, *Romanic Review*, III, 158.

from real love; secondly, the hero submits to the head-cutting *after*, not *before*, the lady offers him her love. To understand these exceptional features we must study certain other facts of the *GCK*. In the first place, it is to be noted that if the Green Chapel is a fairy mound, Gawain never entered it, and hence never reached the Other World. What then is the castle in which he stayed from Christmas to New Year's? Now Professor Brown has shown that "in an earlier and more complete form of the type of story which they [the *Erec* and *Iwain*] represent the hero must have been entertained by a hospitable host, who in the morning led him to the adventure of the Other World."¹ He thinks that this hospitable host must originally have been a different appearance of the Other-World being, the "shape-shifter commissioned by the *fée* to guide the hero to her land." All this coincides curiously with the story of the castle in *GCK*: Gawain is entertained by a hospitable host, who *is* the shape-shifter, and he is guided by a servant of the host to the entrance of the mound. It seems to me that what has happened here is obvious. The story originally was much like that reconstructed by Professor Brown for the *Gilla Decair*. A *fée* loved Gawain, and sent an emissary to lure him to her. He traveled for a long time until he came to a hospitable castle where he was entertained until the appointed day by a shape-shifter, the same who had enticed him from court; then he was conveyed to the entrance to the Other World. There he had to submit to the beheading test; when he succeeded in that he was admitted to the Other World, and led to the fairy. Probably he stayed with her some time, and then after having been given a magic talisman—the green lace—he was allowed to return to his own land. Now at some time, a story-teller conceived the idea of making this story a poetic explanation of the founding of an order, probably because the green lace reminded him of the badge of that order. Wishing to associate with the order the idea of loyalty, he altered the nature of the material slightly by having Gawain resist the love of the lady, and he transferred the incident of Gawain and the lady to the hospitable castle, so as to bring the beheading test after it and make the test an evidence of Gawain's loyalty.

¹ *Iwain*, p. 138.

Probably the foregoing seems very violent and arbitrary handling of material, but I would remind the reader that the only two analogues of *GGK* that show primitive features are fairy-mistress stories, that in *GGK* we have an Other-World creature luring the hero to a distant journey and finally bringing him to a lady who offers him her love, and that as in other fairy-mistress stories the emissary of the *fée* is a shape-shifter. Surely such facts deserve attention. Furthermore, part of my reasoning can be confirmed by the evidence of documents later than *GGK*. In the *Percy Folio Manuscript*¹ occurs a ballad called *The Grene Knight*, which, though well known, has never been considered in discussions of *GGK*. It presents some interesting variations from the older romance.

Arthur's knights gather at court on Christmas Day and hold feast. Leaving Arthur, the poet tells us about Sir Bredbeddle, a knight of the west country.² He has a beautiful wife:

because Sir Gawaine was stiffe in stowre
shee loued him priuilye paramour,
& shee neuer him see.

Her mother, who is a witch, named Agostes, transposes the shape of Sir Bredbeddle and sends him to King Arthur's court.

all was for her daughters sake,
that which shee soe sadlye spake
to her sonne-in-law the Knight
because Sir Gawaine was bold and hardye,
& therto full of curstesye
to bring him into her sight.

¹ Ed. Hales and Furnivall, II, 56 ff.

² A knight called Sir Bredbeddle is an important figure in the ballad *King Arthur and King Cornwall* (*PFM*, I, 61; Sargent and Kittredge, *Ballads*, p. 50; etc.). Arthur, informed by his queen that there is a king somewhere who has a round table worth three of his own, sets forth with four knights to find this king. He comes to the king's palace, is received there, and he and his knights make certain boasts of what they will accomplish. Sir Bredbeddle (not named until stanza 40) assists Arthur in carrying these out, and overcomes a certain "lodly feend." In stanzas 53, 55, 59, 68, and 74 he is called "the Greene Knight." His function throughout the story is much like that of the Turk in his assistance of Gawain, in the *Turke and Gowin*, more remotely like that of the villain in *MSF*. He performs magic deeds. (His power is explained as due to the possession of a book written by our Lord.) The king tells Arthur that he has been a lover of Guinevere's and that he has a marvelously beautiful daughter (stanzas 24-25). The king is a conjuror (stanzas 66, 67). Altogether it seems likely that the original of this curious poem was a fairy-mistress story representing various adventures through which the hero (here King Arthur) passed to win a fairy (here King Cornwall's daughter). Sir Bredbeddle was probably not originally one of Arthur's knights (note that he is not mentioned when Arthur's other companions are named early in the ballad), but an attendant upon the *fée*, a green knight who assisted the hero in the tests.

The knight says he is going to prove Gawain's three points. His horse, armor, and weapons are all green. He reaches Arthur's court on Christmas Day, and proposes the beheading game:

I shall lay my head downe
strike itt of if he can
with a stroke to garr itt bleed,
for this day 12 monthe another at his.

He promises to direct the knight to the Green Chapel. Sir Kay boasts that he will do it. Gawain offers and is permitted by the king to try the game. After dining, the Green Knight permits Gawain to strike off his head, picks it up, jumps into his saddle, and reminds Gawain to seek the Green Chapel a year hence. Arthur and Guinevere lament Gawain's plight. The Green Knight arrives home; he knows that his wife loves Gawain.

The court is very sad when Gawain has to depart. He rides through a country inhabited by wolves and wild beasts. Arriving at length at a castle, he is entertained by a knight who is the Green Knight but whom he does not recognize. They agree to exchange their winnings on a certain day. The Green Knight goes hunting. The old witch brings her daughter to Gawain's bed. The lady kisses him thrice, but Gawain refuses to be disloyal to the Green Knight. She gives him a white lace to protect him from any harm in war. When the Green Knight returns, Gawain kisses him three times, but keeps the white lace concealed. Gawain goes to the Green Chapel, submits to the blow, and is but slightly cut. The knight accuses him of flinching, but Gawain says he gave but one blow and will receive but one. The Green Knight says Gawain has lost his three points because he was not loyal in concealing the lace. The knight says, however, that if Gawain will take him to Arthur's court he will be satisfied. They go to court. That is the reason why Knights of the Bath wear a white lace.

The only discussion of this poem which I know of is that by Hales in the edition of the *Percy Folio Manuscript*. He suggests that it is a modernization of the old romance, written at a time when people could no longer read the archaic language of *GGK*. Such an explanation, however, cannot account for the marked differences in incident and motive. It can hardly be a chance that in most instances in which the *Green Knight* differs from *GGK* it is more primitive. Further, on such a hypothesis it would be difficult to account for such a change in structure as the shift from the account of the Christmas celebration at court to Sir Bredbeddle, his wife and mother-in-law. The only reasonable explanation for these differences is that the *Green Knight* goes back to some form of *GGK* anterior to

that in which we now have the poem.¹ Let us see now what bearing the *Green Knight* has on our study. In the first place, we hear in it nothing of Morgain la Faye, whose position in *GGK* is, as I have already pointed out, anomalous and almost certainly not original. Secondly, the lady loves Gawain though she has never seen him, a common feature in Celtic as well as general mediaeval romance,² and the beheading game is a device for enticing him to her. The husband has no other function than to carry out the wishes of his wife. These are all features which I have postulated above as underlying the story of *GGK*. They agree too well with the primitive fairy-mistress story to be the invention of a late redactor, and they are hence proofs that originally *GGK* was a fairy-mistress story.

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[To be concluded]

¹ For discussion of the exact relationship, see the end of section II, in the continuation of this paper.

² *Hist. litt.*, XXX, 34. See references in Cross's article, *Mod. Phil.*, XII, 612, n. 3.

THE INVENTION OF THE SONNET

I

The poets of the court of Frederick II are doubly entitled to remembrance: they are the first group of Italian writers; and they include in their number the authors of the earliest extant sonnets.

Twenty-five sonnets are attributed on good grounds to the literary leader of the group, Giacomo da Lentino.¹ Six other sonnets are attributed on good grounds to members of the group who seem to have been contemporary with Giacomo: three to the Abbot of Tivoli, one to Jacopo Mostacci, one to Piero delle Vigne, and one to Monaldo d'Aquino. The sonnets of the Abbot occur in a five-sonnet *tenzone* with Giacomo, the Abbot writing the first, third, and fifth sonnets. Those of Mostacci and Piero delle Vigne occur in a three-sonnet *tenzone* with Giacomo: the *tenzone* opens with the sonnet of Mostacci, to which the other two poems are replies. The sonnet of Monaldo is independent. The contemporaneity of Monaldo and Giacomo is indicated by the fact that two sonnets are attributed by certain manuscripts to Giacomo and by another manuscript to Monaldo—slight evidence, to be sure, but the only evidence we have as to the time when Monaldo wrote.²

These thirty-one sonnets constitute, as well as it may be defined, the group of the earliest sonnets. They were written, presumably, within the period 1220-50, the period of Frederician activity in general. No sonnets by pre-Frederician writers are extant. There are extant four other sonnets by poets of the Frederician group; but there is in each case reason for thinking the poem later than the general body of Frederician verse. One is by King Enzo, who was

¹ *The Poetry of Giacomo da Lentino*, ed. E. F. Langley, Cambridge, 1915, Sonnets III, V, VII, IX-XXX. Nos. XXVIII and XXX are attributed also, in one MS, to Monaldo d'Aquino; and No. XXIX is attributed in one MS to Petri Morovelli.

² See Langley, *The Extant Repertory of the Early Sicilian Poets* (referred to hereafter as *Repertory*), in *Publications of the Mod. Lang. Ass'n*, XXVIII (1913), 468-72 and 492-96. The two *tenzoni* are printed in *The Poetry of Giacomo*, that of the Abbot and Giacomo comprising the sonnets numbered IV-VIII, and the other those numbered I-III. The sonnet of Monaldo is printed as No. 71 in *Il canzoniere vat. barb. lat. 3963*, ed. G. Lega, Bologna, 1905. On the significance of conflicting manuscript attributions, see *Repertory*, 456, n. 1.

born in 1225, taken captive by the Bolognese in 1249, and held prisoner for the rest of his life. His sonnet opens with a reference to the uncertainty of fortune: "Tempo vene ki sale e ki discende." It is then probable that the sonnet was written during Enzo's captivity. Another of these four sonnets is by Rinaldo d'Aquino, who was presumably the Rinaldo d'Aquino born between 1223 and 1228. Another, by Guglielmo Beroardi, occurs in a *tenzone* written in 1267, in which five other poets, all post-Frederician, take part. The fourth sonnet is by Mazzeo di Ricco, to whom one of the *canzoni* of Guittone d'Arezzo is addressed.¹ It is of course possible that one or more of these four sonnets antedates some of the thirty-one sonnets of Giacomo and his contemporaries; but there is no specific reason in any case for supposing such precedence. The few non-Frederician poets of the Frederician period wrote no sonnets. The activity of the first post-Fredericians, Guittone d'Arezzo and his fellows, seems hardly to have begun before the end of the Frederician period. It is of course possible that some few Guittonian sonnets antedate some few of the thirty-one sonnets of Giacomo and his contemporaries; but there is no particular Guittonian sonnet for which such precedence is indicated.

Within the group of thirty-one sonnets no satisfactory relative chronology appears. Any one of them—except those that stand in the second or in a subsequent position in a *tenzone*—may be, very possibly, the earliest extant sonnet. Cesareo names seven of the sonnets of Giacomo da Lentino as being among his earliest sonnets. But the basis for his distinction is the fact that the seven sonnets all have *CDCDCD* as rhyme-scheme for the sestet; and this fact, as will presently appear, does not constitute an indication of priority.²

¹ *Repertory*, 468-72, 492-96. On Enzo's sonnet, see L. Bladene, "Morfologia del sonetto nel sec. XIII e XIV," in *Studi di fil. rom.*, IV (1889), 23, n. 5. On the date of the *tenzone*, see G. Bertoni, *Il duecento*, Milan (1911), p. 100. The sonnets of Enzo, Rinaldo, and Beroardi are printed by E. Monaci in his *Crestomazia italiana dei primi secoli*, Città di Castello, 1889-1912, pp. 203, 87, 264. The sonnet of Mazzeo is printed by L. Valeriani in his *Poeti del primo secolo della lingua italiana*, Florence, 1816, Vol. I, p. 334. Addition of these four poems to the group of the earliest extant sonnets would not modify the conclusions reached in this paper as to the origin of the sonnet. The form and content of these four poems are indicated in notes 3 on p. 83, 2 on p. 84, 4 on p. 87, and 2 on p. 93.

² G. A. Cesareo, *La poesia siciliana sotto gli Svevi*, Catania, 1894, pp. 273-74. Cesareo, pp. 257 ff., assigns all the sonnets of Giacomo to the last of the three periods into which he divides Giacomo's work; but his whole scheme of division is untenable: see *The Poetry of Giacomo*, p. xxiii, n. 2.

Foresti suggests a division of the poetry of Giacomo into two groups, an earlier and a later, and assigns the more "spontaneous" poems—among which he classes Sonnets XIII, XV, XVI, XXIII, XXIV, XXVII¹—to the earlier group. But Foresti's impressions of Giacomo's spontaneity can hardly be regarded as authoritative; nor is the spontaneity of a poem a sure criterion for its date.²

A list of the earliest sonnets nearly identical with my list is given by Cesareo, in an incidental treatment of the sonnet. He assigns twenty-four or twenty-five sonnets to Giacomo, includes the sonnet of Rinaldo d'Aquino, and does not include that of Monaldo, which he seems not to have known.³

No sonnets by pre-Frederician writers, as has been noted, are extant. There is moreover no reason to believe that sonnets were written by any pre-Frederician poets. Bertoni, to be sure, suggests that the sonnet may have been devised by some member of a hypothetical group of Italian poets which he supposes to have existed in the late twelfth century.⁴ But the supposition of the existence of such a group rests solely upon Bertoni's theory that the work of the Frederician poets was greatly influenced by the lyric of Northern France; and that theory has been thoroughly refuted.⁵ The existence of such a group of poets is moreover inherently improbable. Courtiers of William II, had they written lyrics, would doubtless have written rather in French than in Italian.⁶ There did not exist, between William's death in 1189 and the return of Frederick II from Germany in 1220, any South Italian court that we can fairly

¹ Sonnet numbers in the text of this article refer in all cases to the sonnets as numbered in *The Poetry of Giacomo*.

² A. Foresti, *Nuove osservazioni intorno all' origine e alle varietà metriche del sonetto* (Estratto dall' XII Vol. degli Atti dell' Ateneo di Bergamo), Bergamo, 1895, p. 4, n. 1.

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 273-74, 282, 303, n. 2. The list is in the note on p. 303.

⁴ Langley, *Repertory*, 492-96, 517-19, lists exactly the 35 Frederician sonnets, and records their main metrical characteristics; but he does not speak of these sonnets as constituting the group of the earliest sonnets; and he refrains—in generous courtesy to me—from discussing the origin of the sonnet.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 271.

⁶ By M. Casella in *Bullettino della soc. dant. ital.*, N.S. XIX (1912), 275; and by me in "The Derivation of the *Canzone*" (referred to hereafter as *DC*), in *Modern Philology*, XII (1914-15), 527, Romance section, 135. My page references to *DC* are in the numbering of the Romance section.

⁷ H. Niese, "Zur Geschichte des geistigen Lebens am Hofe Kaiser Friedrichs II.," in *Historische Zeitschrift*, 108 (1912), 482-84.

suppose to have been a center of literary endeavor. And if such a group of poets had existed, surely some definite trace or memory of their work would have been preserved.

The group of thirty-one sonnets constitutes, then, the proper basis for investigation as to the original character and the sources of the sonnet form. The first of the four previous detailed studies of the origin of the sonnet,¹ that of Witte, does not, apparently, define at all the body of verse taken as basis for investigation. Some of Witte's arguments seem to be derived from the usage of Petrarch. The next study, that of Welti, takes as basis for investigation all sonnets of the thirteenth century printed in the manual of Nannucci and one or two other collections. The greater importance of the older sonnets is recognized, but the older sonnets are not defined as a group. The third study, that of Biadene, takes as basis all or nearly all the extant sonnets of the thirteenth century, published or unpublished—about a thousand in number—and proceeds upon the general assumption that features common to a considerable majority of these sonnets are original. This is obviously unsound: for, as Casini remarks in criticism of Biadene, "la prevalenza numerica, che può dipendere da cause accidentali, non prova nulla."² Features which appear in post-Frederician and not in Frederician sonnets are in all probability secondary, not original; and the preference of post-Fredericians for one of two varieties both instanced among the Frederician sonnets does not give the slightest indication as to which of the two varieties is the more primitive. The fourth study, that of Foresti, approves in general the method and results of Biadene. Biadene and Foresti in a few instances recognize the

¹ K. Witte, preface to *Hundert Sonette von Eugen Baron von Vaerst und zwei Freunden*, Breslau, 1825; H. Welti, *Geschichte des Sonettes in der deutschen Dichtung*, Leipzig, 1884, pp. 6-43; Biadene, *op. cit.*, 4-30, 34-36, 42-44, 215-19; Foresti, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-19. Witte's study is not accessible to me: it is reported and criticized in detail by Welti, pp. 31-37.

The article of A. Borgognoni, "Il sonetto," in *Nuova antologia*, S. II, Vol. XIII (1879), 244, is quite worthless. Its main contentions are refuted by Biadene, 217-18. The treatment of the origin of the sonnet by M. Jasinski, *Histoire du sonnet en France*, Douai, 1903, pp. 7-16, is equally worthless. Jasinski is unaware of the existence of the studies of Biadene and Foresti; and his knowledge of the early Italian sonnets is taken at second hand from Welti. I shall disregard in this paper the remarks of Borgognoni and Jasinski.

² T. Casini, *Le forme metriche italiane*, Florence, 2d ed., 1890, p. 36.

greater importance of the older sonnets, but they do not define the older sonnets as a group. Cesareo, whose list of the earliest sonnets has been referred to, uses that list for the purpose of one argument only.¹ He accepts in general the results of Biadene.

II

Each of the thirty-one sonnets consists of fourteen hendecasyllables.² This is then, as has been generally supposed, the original length and constitution of the sonnet form.

Each of the thirty-one sonnets opens with the rhyme-scheme *ABABABAB*. Twenty close with the scheme *CDECDE*; ten with the scheme *CDCDCD*; and one with the scheme *AABAAB*.³

Each of the thirty-one sonnets, then, is formally divided, by a change in the rhyme-scheme, into octave and sestet. In all cases but two (Nos. XXII and XXIX), a full stop in the sense occurs at the end of the octave; and there is a lesser sense-pause in these two cases.⁴ The division into octave and sestet is then original, as has been generally supposed.

For the octave, the rhyme-scheme *ABABABAB* is unquestionably original. Witte regarded the scheme *ABBAABBA* as original.⁵ Gaspari noted, in 1878, that the scheme *ABABABAB* was used regularly by Guittone and most of the other older writers,⁶ and since then this scheme has been generally regarded as the original one. Welti and Biadene attempt to prove it original by pointing out that it prevails among the older writers of the thirteenth century: but they do not define the older writers as a group.⁷

¹ See below, p. 109.

² So do all the Frederician sonnets: *Repertory*, 518.

³ In No. I the rhyme-ending *D* is the same as the rhyme-ending *A*; in II, *E = B*; in III, *C = A*. The initial sonnets of the *tenzoni* do not determine rhymes or rhyme-schemes for the following sonnets. Of the four later Frederician sonnets, each begins *ABABABAB*; three end *CDECDE*; Bernardo's ends *CDCDCD*. In Rinaldo's sonnet, *C = B*. Numbers and schemes for all the thirty-one sonnets except Monaldo's are taken from *The Poetry of Giacomo*. The schemes for Monaldo's sonnet and the four later ones are taken from *Repertory*, 493-96.

⁴ See the table on p. 84, and note 2 on the same page.

⁵ Welti, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁶ A. Gaspari, *Die sizilianische Dichterschule des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, p. 131, n.

⁷ Welti, pp. 28-29; Biadene, 27-28.

The questions as to the original subdivision of the octave and as to the original subdivision and rhyme-scheme of the sestet will require extensive discussion.

The rhyme-scheme *ABABABAB* suggests a subdivision of the octave into four distichs. It is consistent with a subdivision into quatrains, but it does not suggest such a subdivision. If subdivision into quatrains had originally been regarded as of primary importance, the original rhyme-scheme of the octave would presumably have been such as to define the quatrains—for instance, *ABBAABBA* or *ABBCABBC*.¹

The distribution of sense-pauses, as indicated by editorial punctuation, in the octaves of the thirty-one earliest sonnets, is shown in Table I.²

TABLE I

Line	Full Stop	Semicolon	Comma	No Pause
1.....	0	0	17	14
2.....	4	9	18	0
3.....	0	2	18	11
4.....	22	3	6	0
5.....	0	1	26	4
6.....	5	14	12	0
7.....	0	2	22	7
8.....	29	0	2	0

The sense-pauses thus correspond in general to the division into distichs indicated by the rhyme-scheme. There is in no case a full stop after the first, third, fifth, or seventh line; there is a pause in every case after the second, fourth, and sixth lines. A full stop, however, occurs much oftener after the fourth line than after the second line or than after the sixth. There appears thus a tendency to divide the octave, in sense, into two quatrains. It is to be noted, though, that the presence of a full stop after the fourth line is quite natural—the average poetic sentence would run rather to four lines

¹ Cf. Bladene, 8.

² The punctuation is taken, for all the sonnets except Monaldo's, from *The Poetry of Giacomo*. Two pauses (both slight) marked by a colon and one (also slight) marked by an exclamation point are grouped with those marked by a comma. I regard the octave of Monaldo's sonnet (*Lega* does not punctuate) as punctuated *AB,AB,AB;AB*. The octaves of the four later Frederician sonnets are punctuated thus in the editions referred to: Enzo, *A,B,A,B;A,B,A,B*; Rinaldo, *A,B;A,B,A,B;A,B*; Beroardi, *AB,AB,AB,AB*; Mazzeo, *A,B,AB,AB;A,B*.

than to two or to six¹—and that there are nine cases in which the pause after the fourth line is not strong enough to be marked as a full stop.

One of the experimental modifications of the sonnet made early in the second half of the thirteenth century consisted in the expansion of the octave by the addition of two lines rhyming *AB*, so that the first part of the sonnet contained ten lines, rhyming *ABABABABAB*. Monte Andrea, a contemporary of Guittone, wrote over a hundred sonnets in this form; Guittone himself wrote three; and two or three were written by other poets.² The author of this modification evidently regarded the octave as consisting of a series of distichs, and evidently did not regard it as consisting of two quatrains.

On the other hand, Guittone wrote one sonnet with the octave rhyming *ABBAABBA*, and several of his contemporaries occasionally used the same scheme.³ The author of this modification probably thought of the octave as divided into quatrains; but if so he may still have regarded the division into four distichs as the main division of the octave.

In the earliest manuscripts, dating from about 1300, the scribes write the octave in four lines, a distich to a line, with a capital or other initial sign at the beginning of each distich, and without any indication whatever of a division into quatrains. They divide the sestet into tercets, each tercet occupying a line and a half, and being marked by a capital or other initial sign.⁴ Similarly, the first two metrical theorists who treat the sonnet, Francesco da Barberino, writing about 1315, and Antonio da Tempo, writing in 1332, speak of the octave as divided into four parts—called *pedes* by the first writer and *copulae* by the second—but give no indication of a division into quatrains.⁵

It might seem that scribal habit and theoretical statement dating from 1300 or thereabouts could have little weight in determining the original Frederician point of view; but there is good reason for allowing them considerable weight. In treating the main lyric form,

¹ G. Giannini, *Sulla forma primitiva dello strambotto siciliano*, Lucca, 1910, p. 17, notes that in more than half the octaves of the first two cantos of the *Orlando furioso* and of the *Gerusalemme liberata* the main pause occurs after the fourth line, although in the epic stanza there is of course no formal subdivision at that point.

² Biadene, 42–44.

³ Biadene, 27.

⁴ Biadene, 5–7.

⁵ Biadene, 7, 21.

the *canzone*, scribes and theorists stress the subdivision of the first part of the stanza into two equal parts—called *pedes*.¹ Moreover, at the time when they wrote, the scheme *ABBAABBA*, which suggests a division into quatrains, was fast coming into favor for the sonnet octave. And since scribes and theorists refrain, in their treatment of the subdivision of the sonnet, from following the obvious analogy of their treatment of the *canzone*, and from recognizing the new rhyme-division of the octave, their practice and theory must represent a well-established tradition.

In view of these several considerations, it is clear that the octave was originally regarded as formally subdivided into four distichs. It seems probable, further, that the writers of the earliest sonnets were conscious of a tendency to divide the octave, in sense, into two quatrains; but it is clear that even if they recognized this tendency they regarded such subdivision into quatrains as distinctly subordinate in importance to the division into distichs. These conclusions will be confirmed by the results reached in Part VI of this paper as to the source of the octave.

Witte assumed that the octave was originally subdivided into quatrains—an assumption based evidently on his mistaken idea that the original rhyme-scheme of the octave was *ABBAABBA*.² Welti first assumes a division into quatrains; then says that the subdivision into quatrains is a very minor matter; and finally quotes as authoritative Da Tempo's statement that the octave is divided into four *copulae*, and argues that the division into quatrains was subsequent to the development of the rhyme-scheme *ABBAABBA*.³ Biadene's conclusion, as first stated, is the same as mine—which is indeed based largely on Biadene's evidence and argument. Later, however, Biadene assumes, inconsistently and unjustifiably, that the sense-division of the octave into quatrains was sufficiently essential to have

¹ In MSS Laur. Red. 9 (ed. Casini, Bologna, 1900) and Pal. 418 (ed. A. Bartoli and Casini, in *Il Propugnatore*, Vols. XIV [1881] ff.) capital initials are used at the beginning of each *pes* and at the beginning of the *sirma* (or of each *versus* when the stanza is regarded as quadripartite), but are not used in any other position. In MS Vat. 3793 (ed. F. Egidi, Rome, 1902-8) only the main division of the stanza into two parts is noted. In no one of these MSS is there any system about the adjustment of metrical lines to lines of the MS. The first discussion of the division of the *canzone* stanza is that of Dante, in the *De vulgari eloquentia*, Book II, chaps. x-xiii.

² Welti, p. 32.

³ Welti, pp. 28, 34, 37, 42.

THE INVENTION OF THE SONNET

served as sole basis for formal division of the sestet into tercets.¹ Foresti follows Biadene, but is even more inconsistent; for he ends by disregarding the division into distichs entirely, and basing an argument as to the origin of the sonnet on the assumption that the octave was originally divided into quatrains.²

For the sestet, three schemes appear, as already noted, among the thirty-one sonnets; twenty have *CDECDE*, ten have *CDCDCD*, and one has *AABAAB*. This last is Giacomo's *Lo viso e son diviso da lo viso* (No. XVII), a *tour de force* in repetition and equivocal rhyme. This is obviously a deliberate modification of a form already established. Either *CDECDE* or *CDCDCD*, then, is the original rhyme-scheme of the sestet.

The sestets of the type *CDECDE* are clearly divided, by the character of the rhyme-scheme, into tercets. In all the sestets of this type but two (Nos. V and XVIII) the main pause in sense occurs at the end of the third line.³

The distribution of sense-pauses, as indicated by the editorial punctuation, in the sestets of the type *CDCDCD* is shown in Table II.⁴

TABLE II

IV.....	C, D C, D, C D.
VII.....	C, D; C, D; C, D.
XIII.....	C D, C, D; C D.
XV.....	C D; C, D; C, D.
XVI.....	C! D! C! D, C, D.
XX.....	C, D, C, D; C, D.
XXIII.....	C, D, C; D, C, D.
XXIV.....	C, D, C, D, C D.
XXVII.....	C D; C, D, C, D.
XXX.....	C, D, C, D, C; D.

In four of these sonnets, then, Nos. VII, XIII, XVI, XXIV, the main pause in sense, marked by a full stop, follows the third line, and suggests a division into tercets: *CDC,DCD*. In four others, Nos. XV, XX, XXVII, XXX, the sense-pauses, though less marked, suggest a grouping of the lines by distichs: *CD,CD,CD*. In the

¹ Biadene, 4-11, 21. See below, pp. 88-89.

² Foresti, pp. 12-18. See below, p. 98.

³ For the sources of this statement and of the material in the table in the next paragraph, see n. 2 on p. 84.

⁴ See the preceding note. The sonnet of Beroardi has *CD,C,D,C: D*.

other two sonnets, Nos. IV and XXIII, the pauses, though irregular, correspond on the whole rather to the type *CD,CD,CD* than to the type *CDC,DCD*.

We have then, in detail, three possibly original schemes: *CDE,CDE*; *CDC,DCD*; and *CD,CD,CD*. Before attempting the positive solution of the question as to which of these schemes was the original one, it will prove convenient to examine the theories of the earlier critics. In order to be acceptable, it may be noted, a theory must not only justify a given scheme as original, but must offer satisfactory suggestion regarding the development of the other two schemes as secondary.

Witte supposed the original scheme of the sestet to be *CDDCEE*.¹

Wolti holds that the scheme *CD,CD,CD* is original, on the ground that out of seven sonnets of Giacomo four have *CD CDCD* as against three having *CDECDE*, whereas in Guittone the two schemes are equally common, and in Cavalcanti the three-rhymed scheme prevails. He suggests that the scheme *CDECDE* was developed through the influence of the *terzina*; and that the type *CDC,DCD* was developed through influence of the bipartite type *CDECDE* on the original *CD,CD,CD*.² Wolti's grounds for assuming the originality of *CD,CD,CD* are absurdly insufficient. There is no reason to believe that a *terzina* rhyming *ABC* existed in the thirteenth century.

Biadene regards the scheme *CD CDCD* as original, on the ground that some 600 sonnets of the thirteenth century have *CD CDCD* as against some 300 having *CDECDE*. He regards the scheme *CD,CD,CD* as pre-original, and thinks that the scheme *CDC,DCD* developed from it, at the very birth of the sonnet, through the analogy of the division of the octave into quatrains. He explains the form *CDECDE* as a result of a tendency to define the tercets apparent in the type *CDC,DCD*, and to dispel the monotony of

¹ Wolti, p. 32.

² Wolti, pp. 29, 41-42. Wolti's suggestion as to the *terzina* is derived evidently from H. Schuchardt's quite inconclusive *Ritornell* (meaning the *stornello*) und *Terzine*, Halle, 1874. Wolti accepts also, in a footnote, Biadene's argument (made known to him by correspondence) that the scheme *CD CDCD* must be original since it appears in two-thirds of the sonnets of the thirteenth century; and quotes as "sehr einleuchtend" Biadene's theory that the type *CDC,DCD* arose directly from *CD,CD,CD* through the analogy of the division of the octave into quatrains. On these contentions of Biadene, see the next paragraph.

a scheme consisting wholly of alternate rhymes.¹ The logic of Biadene's numerical argument is bad, as we have seen. The process he suggests for the development of the type *CDC,DCD* is also unsound. Biadene elsewhere holds rightly that the octave is divided primarily into distichs, and that the division into quatrains is a secondary matter, concerning sense-pauses. It is very improbable that a minor sense-division of the octave should have led immediately to a major formal division of the sestet—and the division of the sestet into tercets is, in Biadene's opinion,² a formal matter. The analogy of the octave, if operative upon the sestet, would have suggested or reinforced a division into distichs, not a division into tercets.

Foresti follows Biadene, except that he regards *CD,CD,CD* as an actual type. He adds, in favor of the priority of *CD,CD,CD*, this argument: when the octave developed the scheme *ABBAABBA*, the sestet developed occasionally the schemes *CDEEDC* and *CDCCDC*; this parallelism in later development denotes a parallelism in original nature; therefore the original scheme of the sestet was of the same sort as the original scheme of the octave.³ But the second premise is totally unwarranted.

We may now attempt the positive solution of the question as to which of the three schemes—*CDECDE*; *CD,CD,CD*; *CDC,DCD*—is the original one.

The practice of the earliest scribes and the statements of the earliest theorists point clearly to an original formal division of the sestet into tercets, not to a division into distichs. In two of the three main manuscripts the first two verses of each tercet and part of the third verse appear on a single line, the third verse ending on the next line, part of which remains blank. In the other manuscript the first verse of each tercet stands alone, the other two verses following it on the next line. In all three manuscripts a capital letter or other initial sign stands at the head of each tercet.⁴ Francesco da Barberino and Da Tempo both speak of the sestet as divided into

¹ Biadene, 4, 9-11, 34-35. Biadene at first recognizes the existence of a few early sonnets in which the sestet rhymes *CD,CD,CD* with an apparent division into distichs; but thereafter ignores the existence of this scheme as an actual sestet scheme.

² A correct opinion: see the last paragraph on this page.

Foresti, pp. 12-15.

⁴ Biadene, 5-7.

two equal parts—called by the one *mutae* and by the other *vollae*. Neither hints at any other sort of subdivision.¹

External evidence then leads to the belief that either *CDE,CDE* or *CDC,DCD* is the original scheme. Of these two schemes, the former is evidently appropriate for a sestet divided into tercets; in the latter the arrangement of the rhymes has no relation to such a division.² The scheme *CDE,CDE* is then probably the original one.

Other considerations lead to the same result: but before they can be fairly presented the question whether the sonnet was a popular growth or an artistic invention must be discussed.

III

The obvious characteristics of the sonnet mark it plainly as an artistic device. In its length, in its composite character, and in the peculiar and delicate asymmetry of octave and sestet, it is distinctly unlike anything in the mass of Italian popular verse. Moreover, as Foresti points out, the fact that no trace of the sonnet exists in the popular repertory is extremely good evidence that the sonnet never existed as a popular form.³

The burden of proof then rests upon those who hold that the sonnet is a popular growth; but their assertions and arguments by no means sustain the burden. Witte, writing in full Romanticism, declared "dass solche dichterische Formen nicht erfunden werden, sondern sich allmählich und unbewusst erzeugen."⁴ Welti, still swayed by the same forces, writes: "Wir wissen, dass die grossen poetischen Formen nicht Erfindungen eines Einzelnen, sondern Erzeugnisse des einer Gesamtheit eigenen Sprach-, Zeit- und Nationalgeistes sind." He adds in argument the quite untenable premise

¹ Biadene, 6-7.

² Cf. Biadene, 10: "se l'idea prima di chi compose il primo sonetto fosse stata veramente di aggiungere a uno strambotto due terzetti, secondo ogni probabilità egli li avrebbe fatti di tre rime."

³ Foresti, p. 15. Foresti asserts also, less effectively, that if the sonnet had been a popular formation it would have appeared rather in the work of the more popular than in that of the more courtly Sicilian poets: but Giacomo is distinctly popular at times. Foresti argues further, pp. 15-18, that the similarity of the sonnet to the tripartite *canzone* stanza indicates an artist's acquaintance with that stanza. The similarity vanishes, however, on examination: see below, pp. 98-99.

⁴ Welti, p. 31. Witte's theory of popular origin is in reality hopelessly at odds with his theories that the sonnet as a whole is derived from the *canzone* stanza, and that the sestet is derived from the Provençal *tornada*: see below, pp. 99-100.

that long survival of a poetic form is in itself a proof of popular origin:¹ *terza rima* would serve as one Italian instance to the contrary. Biadene proclaims, without argument, "Esso [i.e., the sonnet] non è e non può essere che un prodotto spontaneo delle facoltà musicali del popolo italiano."²

The hypothesis of popular formation, as asserted by Welti and Biadene, derives its only semblance of direct support from their theory that both parts of the sonnet were based upon forms of the popular *strambotto*. That theory, as will be shown in Part VI of this paper, though correct in part, is invalid as regards the sestet: it rests on the unwarranted assumption that the original rhyme-scheme of the sestet was *CD,CD,CD*; and it is otherwise defective. The theory as a whole is therefore untenable; and consequently affords no support to the hypothesis that the sonnet is a popular formation.

We may conclude with assurance, then, that the sonnet is an artistic invention. This conclusion, however, by no means precludes the possibility that the sources of the sonnet were partly—or even wholly—popular.

IV

External evidence leads, as we have seen, to the belief that the scheme *CDECDE* was the original scheme of the sestet. Other considerations leading to the same result may now be presented.

Since the sonnet is to be regarded as an artistic invention, it is highly probable that the original scheme of the sestet bore a logical and effective relation to the scheme of the octave. The scheme *CDECDE* does bear a logical and effective relation to the scheme of octave: the schemes *CD,CD,CD* and *CDC,DCD* do not.

The octave proceeds by a repetition of two varying endings. It is then both logical and effective to close the stanza with a repetition of three varying endings: a scheme of precisely the same nature

¹ Welti, pp. 30, 42. Welti's theory of popular origin is in reality inconsistent with his theories that the sources of the sonnet are half Sicilian and half Tuscan, and that the sestet was added to the octave as a sort of *tornada*: see below, p. 97.

² Biadene, 11. Biadene, reviewing Foresti in *Giornale storico della lett. ital.*, XXVIII (1896), 228, seems inclined to admit that the modification of the scheme *CD,CD,CD* to *CDC,DCD*—which he regards as having taken place in the very creation of the sonnet—may have been artistic rather than popular.

as that of the octave, yet possessing just enough more complexity to adapt it for use in the climax of the poem.

The scheme *CD,CD,CD*, on the contrary, is hardly explicable as an original device for continuation of the scheme *ABABABAB*. If the second part of the stanza was to proceed by precisely the same alternation of endings as the first, why should it stop short with three pairs of lines, instead of continuing to the same length as the first part? A total length of eight lines has a clear logical relation to the progression of a dual series; but a total length of six lines has no such relation. With the scheme *AB,AB,AB,AB;CD,CD,CD*, the two parts of the poem are identical in all respects save size; and the result is an effect of monotony and anticlimax.

The type *CDC,DCD* is even more obviously alien to the scheme of the octave. The octave proceeds by a repetition of two varying endings. The type *CDC,DCD*, on the other hand, consists of two sets of inclusive rhymes, related to each other by an exchange of the outer and inner rhymes—*C* including *D* in the first tercet, *D* including *C* in the second. Surely such a type cannot represent the original idea for the completion of the simple octave scheme.

It is then probable, on the ground of inherent fitness, that the scheme *CDECDE* is the original one.

Moreover, the development of the scheme *CDCDCD*, in both its varieties, as secondary to *CDECDE*, is more readily explicable than the development of *CDECDE* as secondary to *CD,CD,CD*. On the hypothesis that the scheme *CDECDE* is original, the scheme *CDCDCD* is explicable as the result of a continuation of the alternating metrical habit of the octave to a six-line length predetermined by the length of the form in *CDECDE*. The variety *CD,CD,CD* would then reflect a continuation of the distich series of the octave, appropriate to the scheme *CDCDCD* itself; and the variety *CDC,DCD* would represent a subdivision of *CDCDCD* on the analogy of the equally subdivided *CDECDE*. This analogy would indeed have been present from the very start; and on this hypothesis it might be supposed that the type *CD,CD,CD* existed only as a sporadic sense-variation of the type *CDC,DCD*.

If, on the other hand, we suppose that the original scheme was *CD,CD,CD*, the least unlikely supposition as to the development

of the other schemes is the supposition of Biadene, already tried and found wanting.¹

It is then on the whole highly probable that the sestet rhymed originally *CDECDE*, and that it was originally subdivided into tercets.

V

All of the thirty-one sonnets save one are in some sense love poems. Eighteen of the sonnets of Giacomo, and that of Monaldo, express ostensibly personal experience or emotion. The two *tenzoni* and three of the other sonnets of Giacomo (Nos. X, XX, XXX) are more or less impersonal discussions of the character and phenomena of love. The concluding sonnet of the longer *tenzone*, however, is hardly more than a personal tribute from the Abbot to Giacomo. The remaining sonnet, Giacomo's No. XXVI, is a didactic discussion of friendship.²

The tone of the love sonnets is in general lighter than that of the *canzoni*, though the sonnets too are essentially courtly in idea and phrase.

Biadene and Cesareo, it may be noted, overemphasize the popular quality of the sonnets of Giacomo. No. XXIII, cited by Biadene as purely popular, is on the contrary based on a Provençal motive. The parallelism noted by Biadene in No. XXII is no less characteristic of the *coblas capfinidas* than of the *strambotto*—and is indeed characteristic of the *strambotto* only in its later Tuscan form. The repetition of a line in No. XXI, which Biadene notes as constituting a refrain, is possibly a scribal error (the poem exists in but one early manuscript), and the character of the line in question is wholly unlike the normal character of the refrain. This very poem is distinctly artificial in its use of internal rhyme, and is indeed largely derived, as Gaspary showed, from a poem by Folquet de Marseilla. Cesareo asserts that Giacomo excluded from his sonnets all purely feudal imagery, thought, and sentiment, and freed himself entirely, in them, from the conventional troubadour treatment of love. As a matter of fact, Provençal reminiscences appear in the majority

¹ See above, pp. 88-89.

² The sonnets of Enzo, Rinaldo, and Mazzeo are didactic; that of Beroardi is political.

of the sonnets of Giacomo, and in the other sonnets of the group as well.¹

The sestet in every case continues the development of the main idea of the sonnet; in no case has it the detached character of the *tornada*.

VI

Two theories are current as to the source of the sonnet. According to the more recent of the two, the sonnet consists of an eight-line *strambotto* followed by a six-line *strambotto*. This theory was suggested more or less definitely by Tommaseo, Nigra, and D'Ancona; and has been developed and championed by Welti, Biadene, and Foresti, who differ somewhat from each other as to the details of the formative process.²

Welti and Biadene agree that the octave of the sonnet is by origin an eight-line *strambotto*—and in this they are surely right.³ The *strambotto* and the sonnet octave are indeed identical. Each consists of eight hendecasyllables. Each rhymes *ABABABAB*. The distich structure is essential in each. In the *strambotto* the distich is the musical unit: the melody of the first distich is repeated for each subsequent distich. In the *strambotto*, moreover, there is always a pause in sense at the end of the fourth line, and this pause is marked, in the singing, by a considerable rest for the voice: in the sonnet there was presumably, from the start, a conscious tendency to divide the octave, in sense, into two quatrains.

The fact that the sonnets are lighter in tone than the *canzoni* offers some indication that the sonnet is in part, at least, related to a popular form. So, too, does the fact that Dante, discussing the relative nobility of the three lyric forms of his day, ranks the *canzone* highest, the *ballata* next, and the sonnet last.⁴

¹ Biadene, 11–20; Cesareo, pp. 274, 282; *The Poetry of Giacomo*, pp. 116–26.

² N. Tommaseo, in a letter in *Nuove effemeridi siciliane*, Vol. I, No. 1: see Biadene, 219; C. Nigra, *La poesia popolare italiana*, in *România*, V (1876), 417; A. D'Ancona, *La poesia popolare italiana*, Leghorn, 1878, p. 311; Welti, pp. 39–42; Biadene, 9–22, 42–43; Foresti, pp. 12–19. Biadene's theory is accepted by Cesareo, p. 303, n. 2; and by E. Stengel, *Romanische Verslehre*, in Gröber's *Grundriss der rom. Phil.*, II, 1, 88.

³ Welti, pp. 39–40; Biadene, 9–22, 42–43. Foresti, pp. 12–13, accepts the results of Biadene. On the *strambotto*, see D'Ancona, 2d ed., 1906, pp. 146–353, and Giannini, *op. cit.*, pp. 15–18.

⁴ *De vulgari eloquentia*, Book II, chap. III. Cf. Biadene, 22. Biadene, 20–22, notes also that four sonnets bear in one MS (written about 1500) the name *motetto*, a

Welti and Biadene assume that the *strambotto* existed before the sonnet. That opinion is indeed inevitable; but it deserves a word of justification. Two extant *strambotti* appear from internal evidence—strong though not absolutely conclusive—to date from the twelfth century; and a third appears on similar grounds to have been composed before 1250. A single stanza in the *strambotto* form appears in a manuscript written in Bologna in 1286.¹ Several extant Central and North Italian *strambotti* date from the fourteenth century. The *strambotto* is of Sicilian origin; and considerable time must have elapsed between its formation in the island and its spread into Northern Italy.²

The *strambotto* originated in Sicily; the Frederician poets in general doubtless had opportunity to hear Sicilian folk-song; Giacomo da Lentino was a Sicilian, and can hardly have failed to know the *strambotto*. Given these circumstances, the identity of the *strambotto* and the sonnet octave is too complete to admit of the possibility of coincidence. It is not reasonable to suppose that the *strambotto* was derived from the sonnet: the Sicilian peasants can hardly have known and appreciated the poetry of the court. We are then brought to the conclusion that the sonnet octave is derived from the *strambotto*.

This conclusion, based in part on the distich structure of the sonnet octave and on the probability of its subordinate division into quatrains, in its turn confirms the originality of that distich structure, and increases the probability—since the quatrain division is clear, though subordinate, in the *strambotto*—that the writers of the first sonnets recognized, as subordinate, the division of the octave into quatrains.

popular term; that another sonnet bears in another (sixteenth century) MS the name *respecto*, also a popular term; that the use of the term *pedes* as applied by early theorists either to the eight single lines or to the four distichs of the sonnet octave corresponds exactly to the usage of the peasants of today, who apply the term *pedi* either to the single lines or to the distichs of the *strambotto*; and that the terms *mula* and *volla*, applied by early theorists to the tercet, are essentially popular terms. These considerations have, however, it seems to me, but the slightest weight.

¹ Cesareo, *Le origini della poesia lirica in Italia*, Catania, 1899, pp. 12–27.

² D'Ancona, 2d ed., pp. 24–27, 130–36, 169, n. 3, 209–339. D'Ancona's approval, p. 352, n. 1, of the work of Welti and Biadene implies his approval of their assumption of the priority of the *strambotto*. Biadene, 25, notes that Jacopone da Todì (who wrote in Central Italy about 1300) in one of his poems uses a stanza identical with the *strambotto*.

Welti and Biadene agree also that the sestet of the sonnet is derived from a six-line *strambotto* rhyming *ABABAB*.¹ This theory is based on the belief that the original rhyme-scheme of the sestet was *CDCDCD*: but that belief, as we have seen, is in all probability incorrect. Moreover, there is no warrant for the assumption that a six-line *strambotto* rhyming *ABABAB* existed as a recognized form in the thirteenth century—or at any later time. Relatively few six-line *strambotti* are known. Vigo's great collection, containing some 5,000 *strambotti*, has but 180 in which the stanza consists of six lines only, and for about a score of these Vigo himself quotes eight-line variants.² When a six-line *strambotto* is sung, two lines are repeated, evidently to fill out the stanza to what is considered its proper length.³ The voice-rest after the fourth line of the *strambotto* shows a feeling that the mid-point of the stanza has been reached, and points also to the eight-line type as the proper type. Some of the few six-line stanzas in use as popular songs in Central Italy are reductions of known literary octaves: the abbreviation in these cases is clearly a chance result of faulty memory.⁴ It seems then highly probable that the six-line *strambotto*, so far as it exists at all, is merely a sporadic abbreviation of the normal eight-line *strambotto*, not an independent type. The theory that the sestet of the sonnet is derived from a six-line *strambotto* is then quite untenable.

There remain to be noticed certain details of the theories of D'Ancona, Welti, Biadene, and Foresti, as to the origin of the sonnet. D'Ancona's theory, though it gave rise to those of Welti and Biadene, is in itself quite different. D'Ancona wrote merely: "il Sonetto, forma artificiosa se altra mai, altro non è, chi ben veda, se non l'accozzamento di due tetrastici alla foggia dell' *ottava siciliana*, e di un esastico senza le finali rime bacciate."⁵ He did not then state that the sonnet was derived from the *strambotto*, but meant that the sonnet was formed by a combination of two tetrastichs,

¹ Welti, pp. 39-40; Biadene, 9-22, 42-43. Foresti, pp. 12-15, accepts the results of Biadene.

² L. Vigo, *Raccolta amplissima di canti popolari siciliani*, 2d ed., Catania, 1870-74.

³ E. Rubleri, *Storia della poesia popolare italiana*, Florence, 1877, p. 463 (quoted by D'Ancona, 2d ed., p. 353, n. 1).

⁴ Giannini, pp. 19-20.

⁵ D'Ancona, 1st ed., p. 311.

each rhyming *ABAB*—in so far corresponding in process and result to the *strambotto*—with a hexastich rhyming *ABABAB*, itself “il primo o più semplice allungamento artistico del tetrastico.”¹ But the opinion that the tetrastich as such had independent existence as a predecessor of the *strambotto* has been shown by Giannini to be in all probability erroneous;² furthermore, as we have just seen, there is no reason to believe that a hendecasyllabic hexastich rhyming *ABABAB* existed as a separate form in the thirteenth century. D’Ancona eventually accepted the work of Welty and Biadene as a development of his own theory.³

Welty terms the form in *ABABAB* from which he thinks the sestet to have been derived a “Tuscan *rispetto*.”⁴ He means presumably a hypothetical *Ur-rispetto*; for he realizes that the actual Tuscan *rispetto* ends with a rhymed couplet. That he calls the form Tuscan at all is evidently due to a misunderstanding of D’Ancona’s very condensed remarks about the *sestina*.⁵ Welty also remarks: “Nach den Gesetzen der Proportion war für die ottava in der That ein anderer Abschluss als ein sechszeiliger kaum möglich; damit war das einfachste und schönste Verhältniss zwischen Auf- und Abgesang hergestellt.”⁶ The Frederician poets, however, did not feel thus limited by law. In the fourteen Frederician *canzoni* that begin with a first main part of eight lines,⁷ the second main part is of four lines in one case, of five lines in two cases, of six lines in six cases, of seven lines in one case, of eight lines in three cases, and of eleven lines in one case. Welty also suggests that the addition of the hexastich to the octave was due to the influence of the *tornada*.⁸ But the Fredericians in the composition of their own *canzoni* ignored the *tornada*,⁹ and the sestets of their sonnets have not at all, in rhyme-scheme or in content, the *tornada* character.

Biadene insists that the six-line *strambotto* was not merely *added* to the eight-line form, but *fused* with it—by the division of the sestet into tercets on the analogy of the division of the octave into

¹ D’Ancona, 1st ed., p. 311.

² Giannini, pp. 15 ff.

³ D’Ancona, 2d ed., p. 352, n. 1.

⁷ Nos. 4, 6, 7, 16–19, 21, 37, 49, 56, 69, 75, 85 (in this and later notes the Frederician *canzoni* are referred to according to their numbers in the list in *Repertory*, 474–91).

⁸ Welty, p. 40.

⁴ Welty, pp. 38–40.

⁵ D’Ancona, 1st ed., p. 311.

⁶ Welty, p. 40.

⁹ DC, 153.

quatrains.¹ But even if Biadene were right as to the source of the sestet, he would still be wrong as to the fusion.²

Foresti supplements his acceptance of the theory of Biadene by a further argument intended to show just why a *strambotto* of six lines was added to one of eight lines. The process, in his opinion, was as follows. The early poets were familiar on the one hand with the *canzone stanza*, consisting of two equal *pedes* followed by an undivided *sirma* or by two equal *versus*, and on the other hand with the *strambotto* in its eight-line, ten-line, and six-line varieties. The eight-line variety, subdivided into quatrains, must have suggested itself as an equivalent to the two *pedes* or to the two *versus*. The ten-line and six-line varieties must have suggested themselves as equivalent to the undivided *sirma*. The combination of two eight-line *strambotti*, or that of one of eight lines with one of ten, would have resulted in a stanza unlike the *canzone stanza*. The only possible combination, then, was that of an eight-line *strambotto* and one of six lines: the combination of these two resulted in a stanza similar in length and proportion to a very common type of the *canzone stanza*.³ This argument is, however, invalid at several essential points. There is no reason to think that a *strambotto* of eight lines should have suggested itself as an equivalent to a pair of *pedes* or of *versus*. The *strambotto* is divided primarily into four distichs: the division into quatrains is secondary. Moreover, the *pes* of four lines is not typical: it appears in but fourteen Frederician *canzoni*, whereas 43 have a *pes* of three lines, and 28 a *pes* of two lines.⁴ In only two of these fourteen *canzoni* are the lines of the *pedes* all hendecasyllables;⁵ and in none is the rhyme-scheme of the *pedes* ABABABAB. The ten-line variety of the *strambotto* is as rare as

¹ Biadene, 9-11.

² See above, pp. 88-89. Casini, *op. cit.*, p. 37, offers three ineffective arguments in opposition to Biadene's theory as a whole. (1) The theory explains only one sestet type, that in C D C D C D. But Biadene does offer an explanation—unsatisfactory, to be sure—of the rise of the type C D E C D E. (2) The sonnet originated in Tuscany, and can therefore hardly be derived from a popular Sicilian form. But Casini's idea that the sonnet is of Tuscan origin is based on a worthless argument of Borgognoni, refuted by Biadene: see Biadene, 25 and 217. (3) "In generale una nuova forma poetica può svilupparsi dalla modificazione di una preesistente, ma non già per sovrapposizione o per raddoppiamento di essa."

³ Foresti, pp. 15-18.

⁴ DC, 150.

⁵ Nos. 6, 17.

the six-line variety, and we do not know that either existed in the Frederician period. Of the fourteen *canzoni* with *pedes* of four lines each, only five end with an undivided six-line *sirma*.¹

VII

The other and older current theory as to the source of the sonnet is that the sonnet is a *canzone stanza*. This theory was first proposed by Witte, and has been defended with further argument by Mussafia, Tobler, Casini, and Gaspary.² Witte proceeded from the mistaken assumption that the original rhyme-scheme of the sonnet was *ABBAABBACDDCEE*, a scheme which at once suggests *canzone* schemes. The resemblance fades when the real original scheme, *ABABABAB-CDECDE* or *-CDCDCD*, is substituted for the later one; but Witte's theory, with necessary modifications, has nevertheless survived.

The composite arguments of its defenders are as follows: (1) The structure of the sonnet corresponds to that of the *canzone stanza*; for (a) according to Witte, the sonnet is quadripartite, consisting of two quatrains and two tercets, just as the stanza of certain *canzoni* consists of two *pedes* and two *versus*; (b) according to Mussafia, the sonnet is tripartite, consisting of two quatrains and an undivided sestet, just as the normal *canzone stanza* consists of two *pedes* and a *sirma*. (2) The sestet corresponds to the Provençal *tornada*. (3) Certain *canzoni* show a stanza very similar to the sonnet, e.g., Guido delle Colonne's *Amor che lungiamente m' di menato*, one by Guittone d'Arezzo, one by Jacopone da Todi, and one by Dante. (4) The use of a *canzone stanza* as an independent composition is instanced (a) among the early Italian poets, as for example those of the *Dolce stil nuovo*, (b) among the troubadours, in the *cobla esparsa*.

¹ Nos. 4, 17, 18, 69, 75.

² Witte, *op. cit.*; A. Mussafia, *Emendazione di testi*, in *Il Borghini*, II (1864), 211, and *Cinque sonetti antichi tratti da un codice della Palatina di Vienna*, in *Sitzungsberichte der kais. Akad. der Wiss.* (Vienna), Phil.-hist. Cl., LXXVI (1874), 379; A. Tobler, in a review in *Jenaer Literaturzeitung*, V (1878), 668; Casini, chap. III; Gaspary, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, Vol. I, Turin, 1887, pp. 58, 421-22. Tobler's single sentence is quoted by Biadene, 217. In the following analysis I disregard certain untenable arguments of Witte, sufficiently refuted by Welzl, and one invalid subsidiary argument of Mussafia. The *canzone stanza* theory is accepted without new argument by several writers, e.g., P. E. Guarnerio, *Manuale di versificazione italiana*, Milan (1893), pp. 150 ff.

These arguments are not valid.

(1) The octave was originally subdivided, as we have seen, into four distichs: division into quatrains, if it existed, was distinctly subordinate to the division into distichs. Mussafia's assertion that the sestet was undivided is incorrect: it was divided, as we have seen, probably into tercets, possibly into distichs.¹

(2) The theory that the sestet corresponds to the Provençal *tornada* rests on Witte's belief that the original scheme of the sestet was *CDDCEE*—a scheme which does occur in certain *tornadas*. But the actual sestet schemes *CDECDE* and *CDCCDC* are not Provençal, as will presently appear. Moreover, as has already been noted, the Fredericians ignored the *tornada* in the composition of their own *canzoni*, and the sestets of their sonnets have not at all the *tornada* character.

(3) The *canzone* of Guido delle Colonne cited in support of the statement that certain *canzoni* show a stanza very similar to the sonnet rhymes as a matter of fact *ABBABBABCCDEE*.² It resembles the sonnet in that its lines are all hendecasyllables, and, inexactly, in its length; but its rhyme-scheme is very unlike that of the Frederician sonnet. It is to be noted, moreover, that much of Guido delle Colonne's writing was done, presumably, after the activity of the Frederician poets as a group had ceased.³ No other Frederician *canzone*, as will presently appear, bears even as much resemblance to the sonnet as does this one. The other three *canzoni* cited by the defenders of this theory are all post-Frederician. They cannot, therefore, as Foresti points out, be properly proposed as models for the Frederician sonnet. It is indeed very probable, as Foresti also remarks, that their resemblance to the sonnet is due to the influence of the sonnet form on the *canzone*.⁴

¹ Welti, p. 34, volunteering a reinforcement of Witte's argument, states that the early theorists use for the subdivisions of both *canzone* and sonnet the same terms, *pedes*, *vollas*, *frons*, and *sirma*. The term *pedes* is used for both forms, but in different senses; the regular term for the tercet is *muta* rather than *volla*; and the terms *frons* and *sirma* are apparently not used at all with reference to the sonnet: see Bladene, 21-22.

² My statements of rhyme-schemes for Frederician *canzoni* are all taken from *Repertory*, 474-91. Capital letters represent hendecasyllables, small letters represent lines of seven syllables.

³ *Repertory*, 470.

⁴ Foresti, p. 12. Foresti argues also, ineffectively, that in the *canzone* stanza of fourteen lines the line grouping is as often 3, 3; 4, 4 as 4, 4; 3, 3; but only two Frederician

(4a) Similarly, the fact that the poets of the *Dolce stil nuovo*, half a century later than the Fredericians, used the *canzone stanza*—rarely—as an independent form carries no implication whatsoever as to the origin of the sonnet. The Fredericians themselves have no single-stanza form other than the sonnet.

(4b) The *cobla esparsa* was common enough in the latter part of the thirteenth century, but it was virtually unknown among the troubadours with whose work the Fredericians may well have been familiar.¹ The examination of all accessible critical editions of Provençal poets whose work was done wholly or in large part before 1240 shows but ten poems consisting each of a single stanza, one by the Monk of Montaudon, and nine by Sordello.² The stanza by the Monk (No. 10) is very probably the initial stanza of a *tenso* of which the rest has been lost. Of the nine stanzas by Sordello, five (Nos. I, XIII, XIV, XXXI, and XXXV) are very likely fragments,³ and of the remaining four (Nos. XXXIII, XXXVI, XXXVII, and XXXVIII) all but the last have a *tornada* after the stanza proper. Some of the stanzas of Sordello are very likely later than the earliest sonnets.

There are moreover sufficient positive reasons for thinking that the sonnet is not a *canzone stanza*. Welti, Biadene, and Foresti all point out that the simplicity of the sonnet rhyme-scheme is

canzoni, Nos. 22 and 39, are of the first type, and only one, No. 49, is of the second type. Foresti notes as fairly similar to the sonnet in stanza scheme a few other *canzoni*, of which only one is Frederician, No. 22, which rhymes *abcabecddccdde*.

¹ Cf. C. de Lollis, "Appunti dai mss. provenzali vaticani," in *Revue des lang. rom.*, XXXIII (1889), 173: "Se si consideri poi anche che tra gli autori di esse [i.e., *coblas esparsas*] non figurano i nomi dei trovatori dell' epoca classica e che i mss. più antichi non ne danno alcun saggio, appare presso che certo che la *cobla esparsa*, nella sua caratteristica di componimento epigrammatico-morale, sia uno dei più tardi frutti della letteratura occitanica."

² For justification of the selection of this date, see *DC*, 144, n. 1. The editions examined are these: Monk of Montaudon, ed. O. Klein (= *Ausgaben und Abhandlungen*, VII), 1885; Sordello, ed. De Lollis, Halle, 1896; Arnaut Daniel, ed. Canello; Bertran de Born, ed. Thomas; Cercamon, ed. Dejeanne; Elias de Barjols, ed. Stronński; Folquet de Marseilla, ed. Stronński; Guillem Figuera, ed. Levy; Guiraut de Bornell, ed. Kolsen; Marcabrun, ed. Dejeanne; Peire d'Alvernhe, ed. Zenker; Peire Vidal, ed. Anglade; Pons de Capdoll, ed. von Napolski; Rambertino Buvaletti, ed. Bertoni; Uc de Saint-Circ, ed. Jeanroy and Salverda de Grave. In *DC*, 155, n. 1, the number of Provençal single-stanza poems is given as thirteen: this is due to the fact that I then counted Sordello's Nos. II, XI, and XII as single-stanza poems: but they are more properly to be considered as parts of two-stanza—or longer—*tenso*s.

³ See *ed. cit.*, pp. 85–86.

hardly explicable as derivative from the essentially artificial *canzone*. Foresti points out also that the sonnet in its rigidity of form is quite unlike the ever-varying *canzone stanza*; that the early Sicilian *canzoni* are seldom composed exclusively of hendecasyllables; and that the stanzas so composed are mostly eight lines in length.¹ These several considerations deserve development.

The sonnet is distinctly a fixed form, used over and over again by the same poet or by different poets without essential variation. It consists in every case of fourteen hendecasyllables; the rhyme-scheme of the octave is in every case *ABABABAB*; and variation in the sestet is virtually limited to choice between two schemes, *CDECDE* and *CDCDCD*. The Frederician *canzoni*, on the other hand, vary so greatly from each other in stanza structure as to prove that their authors sought originality in stanza formation. Of the eighty-six *canzoni*, seventy-nine are unique in stanza structure, and in one case only does a scheme of any complexity appear in two poems.²

The sonnet consists entirely of hendecasyllables. Only seven of the eighty-six *canzoni* consist entirely of hendecasyllables. In only one of the seven does the stanza exceed nine lines in length. In this one the stanza is thirteen lines in length, and the rhyme-scheme is unlike that of the sonnet.³

The sonnet begins, in every case, with the scheme *ABABABAB*. Not the one of the eighty-six *canzoni* begins with that scheme.

The original scheme for the sestet of the sonnet was probably *CDECDE*. Only three of the *canzoni* end with such a scheme. In none of these are the last six lines all hendecasyllables; and in none does the scheme of the first part of the stanza resemble that of the sonnet octave.⁴

The original sestet scheme was possibly *CDCDCD*. Only one of the *canzoni* ends with such a scheme. Its full scheme is *ababababcdcd*; all its lines are of seven syllables.⁵

¹ Weltl, p. 33; Bladene, 8; Foresti, pp. 11-12.

² See *Repertory*, 517, and *DC*, 153-54.

³ The schemes of the seven *canzoni* are as follows: 1: *ABABCCB*; 6: *ABBAB-BABCCDEE*; 10: *ABABCDDC*; 20: *ABABCCDD*; 46: *ABCABCDEE*; 54: *ABAB-CCB*; 60: *ABCBCDED*. No. 6 is the poem by Guido delle Colonne referred to above, p. 100.

⁴ 2: *abCabCedcedE*; 49: *abcDabcDefGefG*; 78: *abCabCdefdef*.

⁵ 63.

As a further and last objection to the theory that the sonnet is a *canzone* stanza may be noted the opinion of Dante, already referred to, that the sonnet is less noble than the *ballata*, and the *ballata* less noble than the *canzone*.¹

VIII

Nor has the sonnet a model in the Provençal and German poetry from which the *canzone* is itself derived.² I have examined, in the search for such a model, the poems of those troubadours and minnesingers whose work was done wholly or in large part before 1240.³

Within the body of Provençal verse in question—consisting of over 1,400 poems—no stanza composed of decasyllables⁴ exceeds eleven lines in length. In three poems only does such a stanza reach a length of eleven lines. In these three poems the rhyme-scheme is unlike that of the sonnet.⁵

Several Provençal poems begin with the scheme *ABABABAB*; but in only four are the first eight lines all decasyllables. In these four the entire stanza consists of but nine lines, the full scheme being *ABABABABA*.⁶

Only one Provençal poem ends with a scheme of the type *CDECDE*. Its full scheme is *abbaabcabc*; none of its lines are decasyllables.⁷ Only two Provençal poems end with a scheme of the

¹ Bladene, 20–21, points out also that the sonnet is never called *cobbola*, as it would have been—he thinks—if really a *canzone* stanza; and that the term *pedes* as applied by the early theorists to the lines or distichs of the sonnet does not exactly correspond to the term *pedes* as applied at the same period to the subdivisions of the first part of the *canzone* stanza. These two considerations have, however, it seems to me, but the slightest weight.

² *DC*, 156–58.

³ For an exact definition of the bodies of Provençal and German verse examined, see *DC*, 144, n. 2, and 145, n. 4. My statistics for the Provençal poems are based on the statements of F. W. Maus, in his "Alphabetisches Verzeichnis sämtlicher Strophenformen der provenzalischen Lyrik," in *Ausgaben und Abhandlungen*, V, 1884. My statistics for the German poems are based on examination of the editions listed in *DC*, 145, n. 4.

⁴ The Provençal decasyllable is the equivalent of the Italian hendecasyllable.

⁵ Maus, 319: *ABABBCCDDCD*; and 591: *ABBACDDCEEC*; and Folquet de Marseille, XXII (see *DC*, 144, n. 2, 2d paragraph): *ABBAACDDCCD*.

⁶ Maus, 212. For the other poems beginning *ABABABAB*—thirty-three in all, from the period in question—see Maus, 212–42 (omitting 216, 217, 226, 233, 234, 236, 239, 240).

⁷ Maus, 454. The first line is of seven syllables, the second of five, the rest of six.

type *CDCDCD*. In neither are any of the last six lines decasyllables; and in neither does the scheme of the first part of the stanza resemble that of the sonnet octave.¹

Within the corresponding body of German verse—consisting of over 700 poems—no stanza composed of lines at all similar to the Italian hendecasyllable² exceeds eleven lines in length. In two poems only does such a stanza exceed nine lines in length. In these two poems the rhyme-scheme is unlike that of the sonnet.³

Only five German poems begin with the scheme *ABABABAB*. In only one of these are the lines at all similar to the Italian hendecasyllable. In this poem the entire stanza consists of but nine lines, the full scheme being *ABABABABB*.⁴

Only one German poem ends with a scheme of the type *CDECDE*. Its full scheme is *aaBccBdeFdeF*; the lines rhyming *B* and *F* have five stresses, the others are shorter.⁵ Only five German poems end with a scheme of the type *CDCDCD*. In only one of these are the lines at all similar to the Italian hendecasyllable. In this poem the stanza rhymes *ABABCDCDCD*, and is composed of dactylic four-stress lines. In none of the other four poems does the scheme of the first part of the stanza resemble that of the sonnet octave.⁶

There is no evidence that the North French poems of the period in question influenced the *canzone* in any respect.⁷ For the sake of

¹ Maus, 139: *AA Bbbcbcbcbcb*, the first three lines of ten syllables, the others rhyming *b* of five, and those in *c* of six; and 798: *abcdeffgafg*, the first six lines heterometric, the rest of eight syllables. I disregard the few poems ending *-ababab* (Maus, 52, 215, 244) or *-bababa* (Maus, 210, 212).

² I regard as such the lines of five and six stresses, and the "dactylic" line of four stresses.

³ Hiltbolt von Swangau, V: *ABBCCDDEED*; MF, 83, 36: *ABCDABCEEEE*; both composed of dactylic four-stress lines. For explanation of the references in this and the next three notes, see DC, 141, n. 5, and 145, n. 4.

⁴ MF, 113, 33, composed of dactylic four-stress lines. The other four poems are MF, 48, 3, 48, 32, 110, 26, and Margrave of Hohenburg, IX.

⁵ Walther von der Vogelweide, 11.6. The lines rhyming *a*, *c*, and *e* have four stresses, those in *d*, three.

⁶ MSH, 14, X. The other four poems are MF, 212, 37: *ababedcded*, the lines in *d* of three stresses, the others of four; MSH, 54, II: *abcabcDeDede*, the lines in *b* of three stresses, those in *D* of five, the others of four; and 102, III: *AbAbcdeded*, the lines in *A* of six stresses, the others of two; and Ulrich von Lichtenstein, XV: *AbCABCDededE*, the lines in *A* and *D* of five stresses, those in *b* and *d* of three, those in *C* and *E* of six, those in *e* of two. I disregard the few poems ending *-ababab* (MF, 110, 26; Margrave of Hohenburg, I and IX; Ulrich von Lichtenstein, LII) or *-bababa* (MF, 64, 34, 66, 9).

⁷ See DC, 156.

completeness, I have nevertheless examined these poems for a possible sonnet model, with negative results.¹ Within this body of verse—consisting of over 300 poems—no stanza composed of decasyllables exceeds eleven lines in length; in only three poems does such a stanza exceed nine lines in length; and in these three poems the rhyme-scheme is unlike that of the sonnet.² Several French poems begin with the scheme *ABABABAB*; but in only three are the first eight lines decasyllables; in two of these the stanza consists of just the eight lines in question; and in the other the stanza consists of ten lines, the last two rhyming, *AB*.³ No French poem ends with a scheme of the type *CDECDE*. Only one French poem ends with a scheme of the type *CDCCD*; and that poem has a heterometric stanza of 27 lines, the scheme ending *-baaabbcbbc*.⁴

IX

Other untenable theories as to the origin of the sonnet are reported and criticized by Welti and Biadene.⁵ One of them, the theory of Wackernagel that the sonnet is derived from the *Spruch* of the minnesingers,⁶ deserves brief reconsideration, for it has been dismissed on the ground that it assumes without warrant the existence of a literary relationship between Germany and Italy in the thirteenth century—and the existence of such relationship has now been shown.⁷

Wackernagel's theory remains untenable nevertheless. Wackernagel proceeded from the assumption that the sonnet is tripartite, which is not the case, as we have seen. The sonnet resembles the *Spruch*, he argued, in that (1) it is a single stanza; (2) it is longer than the typical *canzone* stanza, just as the *Spruch* is longer than the typical *Lied* stanza; (3) it tends to become didactic; (4) the same

¹ For an exact definition of the body of verse examined, for a statement of the sources of my statistics, and for explanation of the references in the next three notes, see *DC*, 145, n. 3.

² Thibaut de Navarre, 29: *ABABBBBBBA*; and 65: *ABBACDDAA*; Richard de Semilli, 8: *AAAAAAAAABBB*.

³ Chastelain de Coucy, II, and Thibaut de Navarre, 31 (in Tarbé's edition); Blondel de Neele, XIV. In all, thirty-four poems begin with this scheme.

⁴ Hue d'Oisy, II. I disregard the several French poems ending *-ababab* or *-bababa*.

⁵ Welti, pp. 6-20; Biadene, 217-19.

⁶ W. Wackernagel, *Altfranzösische Lieder und Leiche*, Basel, 1846, p. 245.

⁷ In *DC*.

form is repeated from poem to poem, whereas in the case of the *canzone* a new form is devised for each poem; (5) one poem by Hiltbolt von Swangau rhymes *ABBAABBA*.

The first two assertions are correct, but do not suffice to establish the theory. The third assertion is incorrect. Of the thirty-one sonnets, only one, as we have seen, is purely didactic: the rest are in some sense love poems. In the rigidity of its form the sonnet is distinctly unlike the *Spruch*. The sonnet is used by several writers without any essential variation; whereas most of the minnesingers who wrote *Sprüche* use different *Töne* for different series of *Sprüche*,¹ and no minnesinger uses the *Spruchton* of another poet. Hiltbolt's poem is a *Lied*, not a *Spruch*, and its rhyme-scheme is not the original rhyme-scheme of the sonnet octave.²

The single-stanza *Lied*, very common among the earliest minnesingers, and still in use in the Frederician period,³ might indeed be cited with equal appropriateness as a possible model for the sonnet. It occasionally appears in series without variation of form, like the *Spruch*, and it deals with love, being thereby closer to the sonnet than is the *Spruch*. Neither *Spruch* nor single-stanza *Lied*, however, can have suggested the form of the sonnet. The statistics cited in Part VIII of this paper cover *Sprüche* and single-stanza *Lieder* as well as the longer poems. It is, however, possible that familiarity with the *Spruch* and the single-stanza *Lied* may have encouraged the Fredericians in the use of a single-stanza form.

X

The question remains as to how the inventor of the sonnet could have come to expand the *strambotto* octave by a six-line addition rhyming *CDECDE*. It is of course quite possible that he devised the sestet without reference to any pre-existing form. It is quite possible, also, that he had more or less definitely in mind the favorite

¹ Walther von der Vogelweide, for example, has eighteen different *Spruchtöne*, and Der Marner and Bruder Wernher have eight each.

² Ed. cit. in *DC*, 145, n. 4, No. VIII. Welti, p. 35, replies to Wackernagel that the *cobla esparsa* was as possible a model for the writers of the first sonnets as the *Spruch*: but this, as we have seen, is not the case. Welti's voluntary reference to the post-Frederician *Sprüche* of Stolle, rhyming *aabeddbcefeegg*, is quite irrelevant.

³ *DC*, 155, n. 1.

Frederician form for the *pedes* of the *canzone stanza*: two *pedes*, each of three lines, rhyming *ABCABC*.¹

It seems worth while to call attention in this connection to a Sicilian Arabic poem marked by rhyme of the type *ABCABC*, which was composed about 1100 by Abū al Ḥasan, and is classed as a variety of the popular *zağal*.² The first two stanzas read as follows in the transliteration of Amari:

Wa ghazalin musciannefi
Kad retha li ba'da bu'di
Lamma rea ma lakeitu.

Mithlu raudhin mufawwefi
La obāli wahwa 'iudi
Fi hubbihi ids dhaneitu.

There follow four other stanzas, with the same rhymes in the same order.³

The popular nature of the metre is unmistakable, for it is accentual, whereas Arabic art poetry is strictly quantitative and not accentual.⁴ Amari classes the poem as a variety of the *zağal*. The *zağal* has not yet been thoroughly studied: two works upon it have been promised, but neither has appeared.⁵

¹ This scheme appears in thirty-eight of the eighty-six *canzoni*: *DC*, 151.

² The Arabic text is printed by M. Amari in his *Biblioteca arabo-sicula*, Leipzig, 1857, p. 580; the first two stanzas are printed in transliteration by Amari in his *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia*, Vol. III, Part II, Florence, 1872, p. 744, n.; Italian versions are given by Amari in *Storia*, p. 743, n., and in *Biblioteca arabo-sicula, versione italiana*, Vol. II, Turin, 1881, pp. 431-32. Amari discusses the poem in *Storia*, pp. 738-45, and *Biblioteca, vers. ital.*, p. 430, n. 5. The poet's full title is given, *ibid.*, p. 429, as Abū al Ḥasan 'Alī ibn 'Abd ar Raḥmān ibn abī al Baṣayr, al Kātib, aṣ Ṣiqillī, al Anṣārī. On this poet, see *Storia*, pp. 742-45; and *Biblioteca, vers. ital.*, pp. 429-32, 486, 609. On the *zağal* see n. 5 on this page.

³ *Storia*, pp. 743-44.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 741; *Biblioteca, vers. ital.*, p. 431, n.; C. J. Lyall, *Translations of Ancient Arabic Poetry*, London, 1885, pp. xlv ff.

⁵ See Amari, *Storia*, 738-45; and A. F. von Schack, *Poesie und Kunst der Araber in Spanien und Sicilien*, 2d ed., Vol. II, Stuttgart, 1877, pp. 50-58. M. Hartmann, *Das arabische Strophengedicht. I. Das Muwaššah (=Semitistische Studien, 13/14)*, Weimar, 1897, p. 237, promises a companion volume on the *zağal*. Baron D. von Günzburg published at Berlin in 1896 the first volume of a work entitled *Le diwan d'Ibn Guzman, texte, traduction, commentaire enrichi de considérations historiques, philologiques et littéraires sur les poèmes d'Ibn Guzman, sa vie, son temps, sa langue et sa métrique*. Ibn Guzman was the first master of the *zağal*: see Hartmann, p. 2.

The poem is a love-lyric. Amari was so struck by its similarity in general character to the *strambotto* that he refers to it, in one instance, as a *strambotto*.¹

The inventor of the sonnet may well have been familiar with such a form as this. He may have heard the *zağal* in actual use as a popular song. The Arabic population of Sicily was still considerable in the early thirteenth century, though smaller than it had been under the Norman kings.² Arabic poets, moreover, may have visited the court of Frederick II.³

This *zağal* form, then, is one which may well have been known to the inventor of the sonnet, and one which, through its likeness to the *strambotto*, might well have been associated with it in the making of a new form. It is then possible that the *zağal*, in such a variety as this, suggested the scheme of the sestet.

XI

The sonnet, though popular in the source of one at least of its parts, is, as we have seen, an artistic invention.

The inventor was, in all probability, as Foresti and Langley suggest,⁴ Giacomo da Lentino. There is no reason to think that sonnets were written by poets earlier than the Fredericians. The inventor of the sonnet was then, in all probability, a member of the Frederician group. Twenty-five of the thirty-one sonnets are attributed to Giacomo, and five of the remaining six appear in *tenzoni* in which he participated. He was the literary leader and by far the most prolific writer of the group. He was interested in metrical experiment: each of his twenty-two *canzoni* is unique in scheme.⁵ He was, moreover, a Sicilian, and the octave of the sonnet is derived from a popular Sicilian form.

¹ *Biblioteca, vers. ital.*, p. 431, n. Amari translates the poem, *ibid.*, pp. 431-32, as follows: "Ecco una gazzella ornata di orecchini, Che mi canta le nenie quand' io son ito; Quand' ella vede ciò che m' è successo. Come prato variopinto, Non mi cale [d' altro] quand' ella è meco, Poichè nell' amor suo mi consumo, Il suo volto è luna che spunta; Superbisce quando ha preso tutto per sè l'amor mio; E quindi io peno. Sur un tralcio sottile, Le è dolce il mio lungo dolore. O crudeltà: ed io sto per morire! Sdegnosa, inaccessa a pietà, Non rifugge dal romper la fede che mi diè: Tace ostinata; Tiranna, ingiusta; Diversa da quella che fu un giorno. Oh felice chi le sta accanto!"

² *Storia*, pp. 590-97, 534-36.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 889. The extent of the Arabic influence at the court of Frederick has, however, been overemphasized: see Niese, *op. cit.*, 492-93.

⁴ Foresti, p. 19; *The Poetry of Giacomo*, p. xxv.

⁵ *The Poetry of Giacomo*, pp. 101-14.

The sonnet, then, is Sicilian: certainly in the source of its octave; presumably in the person of its inventor; possibly in the source of the sestet. If the inventor was Giacomo, or any other member of the Frederician court, the actual invention may of course have occurred upon the mainland.

Biadene argues—true to his general method—that the sonnet must have originated in Central Italy, since nearly all the thousand sonnets of the thirteenth century are by Central Italian authors, while only twenty-seven (by Biadene's count) are by Sicilians. But Cesareo and Foresti, seeing in this instance the absurdity of Biadene's method, protest that the fact that the earliest sonnets are of Sicilian authorship points to Sicily as the place of the sonnet's origin.¹

XII

Within the group of thirty-one sonnets, as has been said, no satisfactory relative chronology appears: any one of them, except the six that stand in the second or in a subsequent position in a *tenzone*, may be the earliest extant sonnet. But one is tempted, nevertheless, to venture for a moment beyond solid ground—even beyond the uncertain ground of probability—and to seek to discover which of the twenty-five sonnets in question has the most plausible claim—though it be but slight—to be regarded as the earliest extant sonnet.

The chances are that it is rather one of the sonnets of Giacomo than one of those by other authors; that it is rather one whose authenticity is undisputed than one whose authenticity is doubtful;² and that it is one of those rhyming, in the sestet, *CDECDE*. This leaves eleven sonnets: Nos. IX–XII, XIV, XVIII, XIX, XXI, XXII, XXV, XXVI. Six of these, however, have some formal characteristics that are secondary rather than primitive. Nos. IX and X have equivocal rhyme; Nos. XXI and XXV have internal rhyme; in No. XXII the pause in sense at the end of the octave is notably slight; in No. XVIII there is no pause in sense after the third line of the sestet. This leaves five sonnets, Nos. XI, XII,

¹ Biadene, 23–25; Cesareo, *La poesia siciliana*, p. 303, n. 2; Foresti, p. 19, n. 3. See also above, p. 98, n. 2.

² See n. 1 on p. 79.

XIV, XIX, and XXVI, which appear to be purely primitive in form. Three of these are of special, and presumably secondary, character in content. No. XXVI is the one purely didactic sonnet of the group; No. XIX is semi-didactic; and No. XIV is an artificial array of paradoxes. The two remaining sonnets, Nos. XI and XII, are both love poems of normal type. No. XI is the more general of the two, and might well have been written at any time. No. XII reflects a particular situation; and that situation is clearly a secondary stage in a love affair: "vostri sembianti mi mostraro | isperanza d' amore . . . Or vi mostrate irata." No. XI, then, *Molti amadori la lor malatia*, is more completely primitive in character than any of the other sonnets; and has therefore a slightly more plausible claim than any other to be regarded as the earliest extant sonnet.

SUMMARY

The main conclusions reached in the several parts of this paper are as follows. The group of the earliest extant sonnets consists of thirty-one poems, twenty-five by Giacomo da Lentino, and six by four of his associates. The sonnet consisted originally of fourteen hendecasyllables, and was divided into octave and sestet. The octave rhymed *ABABABAB*, and was subdivided into four distichs. A division into quatrains was probably recognized, but regarded as distinctly subordinate to the division into distichs. The sestet, in all probability, rhymed *CDECDE*, and was divided into tercets. The sonnet was an artistic invention; its inventor was in all probability Giacomo da Lentino. The octave of the sonnet was taken from the regular eight-line Sicilian *strambotto*. The source of the sestet is uncertain: it may have been suggested by a Sicilian variety of the popular Arabic *zağal*. The current theory that the sonnet is a combination of an eight-line *strambotto* and a six-line *strambotto* is untenable in its suggestion of a six-line *strambotto* as source of the sestet. The current theory that the sonnet is a *canzone stanza* is quite untenable.

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THE *ENUEG* IN PETRARCH AND IN SHAKESPEARE

Two noteworthy specimens of the *enuæg* are not mentioned in Dr. Hill's interesting and able studies of the *enuæg* and the *plazer*.¹ One is a sonnet of Petrarch, No. 312 in the *Canzoniere*:

Né per sereno ciel ir vaghe stelle,
Né per tranquillo mar legni spalmati,
Né per campagne cavalieri armati,
Né per bei boschi allegre fere e snelle;
Né d' aspettato ben fresche novelle,
Né dir d' amore in stili alti et ornati,
Né tra chiare fontane e verdi prati
Dolce cantare oneste donne e belle;
Né altro sarà mai ch' al cor m' aggiunga;
Sì seco il seppe quella sepellire
Che sola a gli occhi miei fu lume e specchio.
Noia m' è 'l viver sì gravosa e lunga,
Ch' i' chiamo il fine per lo gran desire
Di riveder cui non veder fu 'l meglio.²

The other is Shakespeare's Sonnet LXVI:

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,
As, to behold Desert a beggar born,
And needy Nothing trimm'd in jollity,
And purest Faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded Honour shamefully misplaced,
And maiden Virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right Perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And Strength by limping Sway disabled,
And Art made tongue-tied by Authority,
And Folly, Doctor-like, controlling skill,
And simple Truth miscall'd Simplicity,
And captive Good attending captain Ill:
Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.³

¹ R. T. Hill, "The *enuæg*," *PMLA*, XXVII (1912), 265; "The *enuæg* and *plazer* in Mediaeval French and Italian," *ibid.*, XXX (1915), 42.

² *Le rime di Francesco Petrarca*, ed. Carducci and Ferrari, Florence, 1899, p. 427.

³ *The Poems of Shakespeare*, ed. Wyndham, New York, p. 147.

In each case the three characteristics of the *enuæg* appear: the list, the initial repetition, and the emphatic presence of a word denoting "annoyance." In Petrarch's sonnet we have, instead of the usual list of annoyances, a list of delights, each negated: the poem is thus a sort of reversed *plazer*. The word *noia*, the regular Italian equivalent for *enuæg*, stands in a commanding position at the head of the concluding tercet. In the English sonnet the list is a list of annoyances. The word "tired," the perfect English equivalent for the idea of *enuæg*, introduces the poem, and recurs at the head of the concluding couplet.

In each case the technical device is freely assumed into lyric life. Petrarch, beyond doubt, knew specimens of the Italian *noia*, and had the type in mind when he composed this poem. The striking correspondence of Shakespeare's sonnet to the mediaeval formula can hardly indicate acquaintance with Provençal or Italian poems: rather does it prove the real humanity of the *enuæg*.¹

Dr. Hill, in his second article, treats several Italian poems marked by initial repetition of *maledetto* or *benedetto*, classing them as special forms of the *enuæg* and *plazer*. I do not believe that the *maledetto-benedetto* type stands in any genetic relation to the *enuæg-plazer*. The *benedetto* motive appears in the peasant lyric, and the *benedetto* and *maledetto* poems normally express subjective emotion; whereas the *plazer* and *enuæg* are distinctly literary, and are devoted to objective criticism.²

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¹ For references to additional specimens of the *enuæg* and *plazer*, see L. Bladene, "Morfologia del Sonetto nel sec. XIII e XIV," in *Studi di filologia romanza*, IV (1889), 174; and G. Bertoni, *Il duecento*, Milan (1911), p. 185. The first stanza of Théodore de Banville's "Ballade des belles Châlonnaises" (*Trente-six Ballades Joyeuses*, Paris, 1873, p. 28) has all the characteristics of the *plazer*.

² For additional *maledetto* and *benedetto* poems, see Bladene, *op. cit.*, 15-17; and H. Schuchardt, *Ritornell und Terzine*, Halle, 1874, p. 121.

